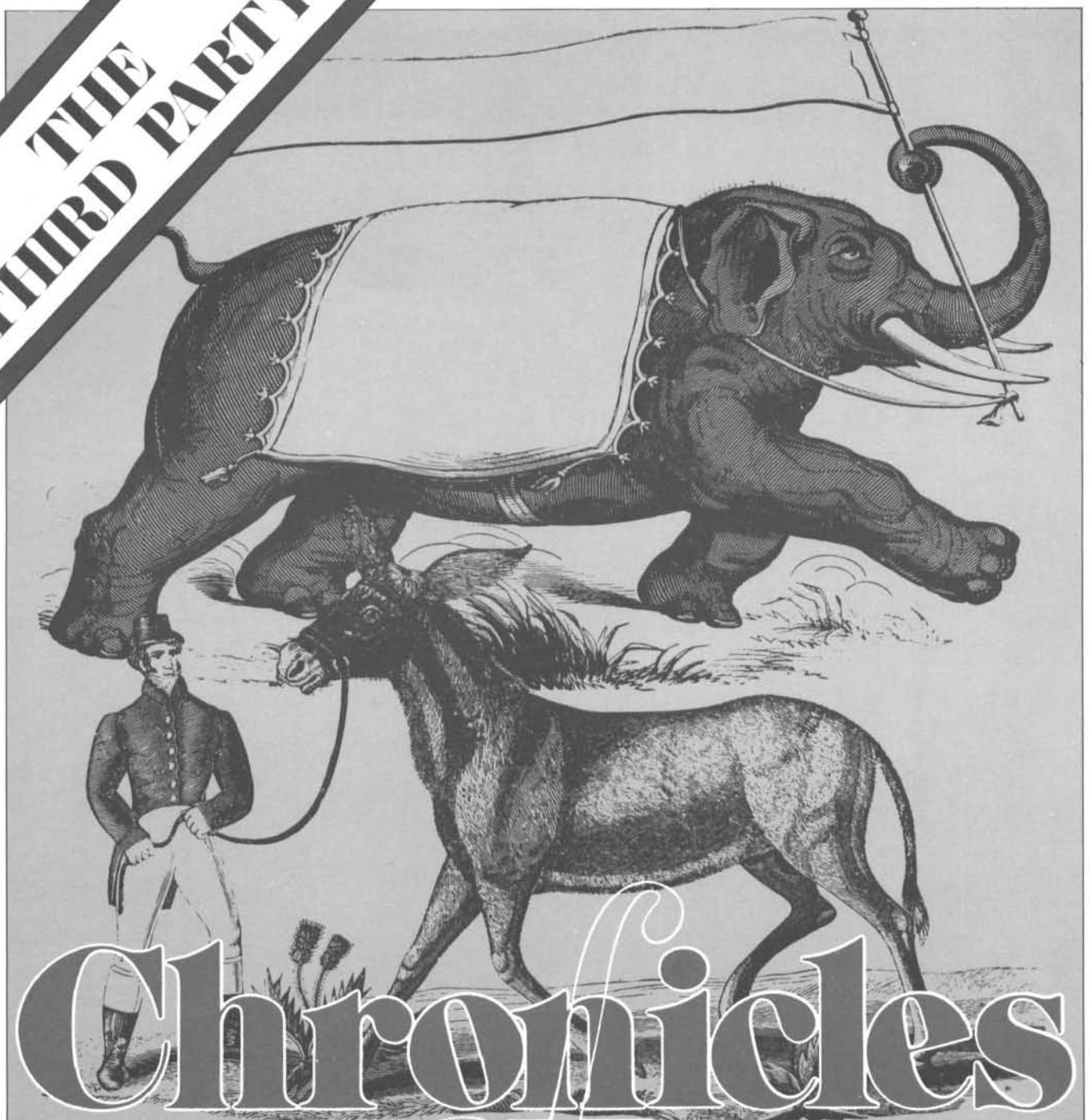
THE THIRD PARTY



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Contents

4 Editor's Comment — Leopold Tyrmand

Opinions & Views

6 Questioning Mr. Percy — Joseph Schwartz
—Walker Percy: *The Second Coming*

9 God, Reason & the Redistribution of Income — William E. Cage
—Robert L. Heilbroner: *Marxism: For and Against*
—Michael Harrington: *Decade of Decision*

11 Our Poky Little Universe — Gary S. Vasilash
—Ann Beattie: *Falling in Place*
—Johanna Kaplan: *O My America!*
—Stuart Dybek: *Childhood and Other Neighborhoods*

16 The *Weltanschauung* Mishmash — James J. Thompson, Jr.
—G. Gordon Liddy: *Will*

18 Questions Unanswered and Left Hanging — Juliana Geran Pilon
—Wright Morris: *Plains Song*

20 A Connoisseur's Recipe — Alan J. Levine
—Richard Nixon: *The Real War*

22 Two Married Pronouns — Christina Murphy
—Herbert Gold: *He/She*

23 Updating the Doctrine of the Two Spheres — Gordon M. Pradl
—Carl N. Degler: *At Odds*
—*Marriage and Family in a Changing Society:* Edited by James M. Henslin

26 Paltry Secrets — Michael W. Albin
—Wilbur Crane Eveland: *Ropes of Sand*

28 Of Marxian Bondage — Clarence B. Carson
—Sidney Lens: *Unrepentant Radical*

30 On Men & Marines — Otto J. Scott
—Edwin McDowell: *To Keep Our Honor Clean*

31 Coercive Utopians Then and Now — Arthur E. Hippler
—Gavan Daws: *A Dream of Islands*

33 The Dangerous Edge — Robert C. Steensma
—Graham Greene: *Doctor Fischer of Geneva or The Bomb Party*

In Focus

36 Symons's Scholarship — Becki Klute
—Donald Symons: *The Evolution of Human Sexuality*

Lessons of History: *The Year of the French*

37 Perceptibles

Waste of Money

37 Bargain-Basement Kafka — William O'Brien
—Thomas Berger: *Neighbors*

38 A Friday of Manhattan Island: *Men in Love*
Toffler's Hokum: *The Third Wave*

39 That's Entertainment: *Ninja*
Cap-Gun Noises Somewhere: *Thunder on the Right*

Screen

40 The Portrait of an Artist as a Kvetch and Other Trivia — Eric Shapearo
—*Stardust Memories*
—*My Bodyguard*
—*Hopscotch*

41 Kelly? — Stephen Macaulay
—*Xanadu*

Art

42 China's Treasures in Bronze
Balthus

Music

43 Records — Doug Ramsey
For Sentimental Cognoscenti

44 Loss

Correspondence

44 Letter from Copenhagen: Women Between Lib and Love — Thomas Molnar

45 Letter from Central America: Breathtaking Vistas and Gloomy Perspectives — Edward J. Walsh

The American Proscenium

48 Religion & Politics—Historical Footnote

49 Blessed Complacency—The Nobel Prize

50 The Religious Heritage Award

Journalism

50 *Chicago Tribune's* Neophyte Spirit Incertitude

51 *Time's* Hypocrisy: The Continuing Saga Correct

35, 40, 47 Liberal Culture/ 38 Social Register

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The Third Party

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Editor's Comment

For 200 years, things were rather simple. Both philosophers and historians seemed to agree that the impecunious social classes, their occasional moods notwithstanding, were the agents of change. Deprived of the good things in life, they wanted a change for the better. This drive used to be called, by sympathetic ideologists, the push for progress. The upper classes, in contrast, were conservative or reactionary. All they wanted was to preserve the status quo or to reinstate lost privileges.

It is not so simple anymore. In *our* America, the proprietary classes have become liberal and now loudly demand progress. They want to change the lot of the less fortunate. However, it appears as if the not-so-well-offs have become, in that same America, puzzlingly conservative: they want things which may not be in our future, but which were verifiably present in our past. Those lower classes now seem to hanker after some order of civic allegiances, some better-defined personal opportunities, some revived relevance of well-fixed values, some clear-cut notions and feelings about the moral duties of the individual as well as the community. Or perhaps they are even longing for things like America's global security and common sense in the interplay between man and state.

Till now, conventional wisdom maintained that each of the two major parties reflected the respective interests of the lower and upper class. But is that still so? The current confusion of class aims imbues our hearts with strong doubts.

On the last day of the Democratic Party's 1980 convention in New York City, it somehow seemed as if the Democratic Party had ceased to exist. It was obviously Mr. Edward Kennedy's convention, both in spirit and letter: the outpouring of emotions was unmistakable, and the party's electoral platform was, to the letter, a blatantly liberal, Kennedy-inspired set of slogans. Yet not Mr. Kennedy but his opponent was nominated as the Democratic Party's candidate for the presidency.

That development indicated that the convention, allegedly a body which represented the sentiments of a vast political organism, warmly embraced a man (and his ideas) who had been roundly rejected by the organism at large. Hence, the appellation "Democratic" became malapropos, at least in the American sense of the word. The fact that Mr. Carter was renominated only added insult to injury: the convention floor visibly stood by the man who had to go, and gave a go-ahead to a man whose position was, at that moment, a product of political manipulation rather than of the unequivocal preference of the body politic.

The Democratic Party, during the last 100 years, has been a classic American political institution rooted in the social mosaic and bound by the principles of compromise and consent. It has been in power for most of this century, and has established itself as perhaps the most powerful element of the American sociopolitical reality. Therefore, if I were a newspaperman fishing for a verbal effect, I'd say: "The Democratic Party is dead!" Which, of course, is *not* true.

It is only the ideological foundation of the Democratic Party which is rotting. Neither social and ethnic mosaics nor the practice of compromise and consent work any longer. However, there is a process of regeneration within the process of decay. Since the time of Roosevelt, the Democratic Party has tried to establish a single ideological identity in spite of its mosaic composition. From the ideological turmoil of the 60's have emerged the political motifs for a new drama: the McGovern episode eight years ago was only a dress rehearsal. It seems that the grand opening occurred this year in Madison Square Garden. The Democratic Party has nowhere to go but on a quest for a coherent and functional ideology. It has already started.

Which can hardly be said of the Republican Party, Barry Goldwater and Ronald Reagan notwithstanding.

Perhaps such talk is rather unbecoming: after all, recent events would seem to prove that the two-party system in its present mixture has once again survived the test of viability. However, most of us have a gnawing sense that both parties have profound identity problems, and that such problems involve the very sense of their being. A disorder of political notions is nothing new in America, yet we all feel that today's muddle is extraordinary and exceptional. The craving for constants, invariables, axioms, tangibles seems to be a universal sentiment. How or where can we find them?

It seems that the most ingrained, perpetual conflict within the American ethos and its political materialization is a competition between two populisms. One is practical populism, and it believes that basing political and social decisions upon people's factual, genuine, unfalsified wishes is the most advantageous method of sustaining a viable polity and a satisfied society. This populism grows from social reality, and it expresses the hopes, propensities, choices and preferences of the people in every instance of life.

The second populism is intentional and prescriptional, and its rationale, its ultimate mission, is to prescribe reality. Certainly this ideology is rooted in moral idealism, and it claims an all-encompassing rationality as its dialectical foundation. Yet, from the beginning, the attempts to run this country according to that rationale—whether by benevolent gentry from Virginia or well-intentioned patriciate from Massachusetts—have fallen far short of brilliant. Sooner or later, practical populist feelings were bound to overwhelm even the most propitious prescriptive endeavors. Finally, sometime around the end of the 19th century, those endeavors ceased to amount to anything significant.

About that time, the Democratic Party made its bid for

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an exclusive franchise on practical populism, and this new association lasted until the 1970's. Now, at the threshold of the 80's, everybody knows that the Democratic Party—the party of Kennedy, McGovern, forced busing and militant feminism—is one of the mightiest and most aggressive forces of prescriptive populism ever witnessed in American public affairs. Its only redeeming feature is that everything to its left is even worse.

But what about the Republican Party? Its bold rejection of the ERA—an issue defeated by women who have balked at a prescribed reality—would indicate that the Republican Party has a sense of what is happening in America. Nonetheless, the Republicans are still Johnny-come-latelies: so far, it looks like they'll try to pursue the path of glory which the Democrats have abandoned. The Republicans now seem to perceive the alluring promise in the great ethnic patchwork of American pluralism and in the compromise and consensus device. Does it make much sense?

The campaign of Mr. John Anderson may shed some light on the subject. Mr. Anderson—and everybody would agree on it now—was manufactured by a group of left-wing millionaires (yes, they do exist, and they apparently sleep well, untroubled by their consciences), an occurrence which is special to advanced capitalism, where selling capitalism's demise is a thriving business. Before Mr. Anderson's venture, these millionaires financed Vietnam-era defeatism and every other anti-American initiative, thus objectively serving the goals of Soviet imperialism. Mounting a presidential candidacy of their own was a throwback to the robber barons' and cattle lords' political morality (something which is fiercely portrayed as evil incarnate in "progressive" Hollywood films). That effort was contingent upon finding an antipopulist candidate—and Mr. Anderson was perfect for the part. The media, which replaced vested-interest groups as the most potent engine of political corruption, lent eager—one might even say unprecedentedly eager—support to that operation. If George Wallace, a previous independent candidate, had had a fraction of the support the press gave to Mr. Anderson, he might *still* be the United States president.

Mr. Anderson claimed that independence was the ideological substance of his bid and the magic formula for appealing to everybody. In the American political environment, independence is a negative value, a detractive calculation, an affirmation of little, or just nothing. His attempts to structure an eclectic, all-encompassing program on principles of fiscal conservatism and social liberalism—two exclusionary concepts—were absurd and doomed to failure. It apparently was a final cry for gallimaufry as the supreme political virtue.

However, does Mr. Anderson's dud mean that there is no room for a third proposition in the contemporary tapestry of American politics? To my mind, there is not only room, there is even an acute need for *something.* I believe that it must be an ideological proposition. I also believe that every independent or third-party attempt, from Teddy Roosevelt to John Anderson, has failed because it was, by definition, confined to the political arena. Is a party founded on a third proposition—which would be qualitatively different from the Democratic and Republican ones—an impossibility in America? There is an historic record of defeat and futility; the indications are that third propositions, whenever they succeed in attracting popular attention, tend to ensconce themselves within one of the existing party structures. However, we have reached the point where it has begun to dawn on most of us that neither the Democrats nor the Republicans, in their present forms, can give this country that sense of moral and civic commitment, or obligation, on which nations and civilizations thrive. They could in the past, but they no longer can, and something must be done about that. Thus, any successful effort in launching a third proposition *must* begin with two fundamental premises.

First: the re-establishment of the sense of mission and service within a political venture. We cannot recall the last time a candidate for political office unequivocally announced that he sought that office because he wished just to serve America. What the candidates do now is to proclaim their fitness for the office—moral or mental or professional. Over the last half-century a pattern has become prevalent which most strongly emphasizes the promises made to the electorate. "All things to all men," a contemporary British observer called this political tradition. We are wary of this kind of principlelessness. We think that, carried to its extreme logical and pragmatic justifications, it may bode ill for America. The fundamental principle of *serving* the country must be restored.

Second: a third proposition must be *culturally* substantiated and motivated. Instead of rushing into the elective sweepstakes, it has to structure a philosophical foundation. Politics is the *last* stage on which the fortunes of such propositions should be tested.

I hope The Rockford Institute and the *Chronicles of Culture* will prove themselves to be effective forums in which such propositions may be formed, analyzed and abundantly written about.

—Leopold Tyrmand

Reagan's Victory

and its magnitude give a new and fascinating dimension to our editorial. The next issue of *Chronicles of Culture* — entitled "Toward Conservatism with a Human Face" — will attempt to articulate our thoughts and hopes in the light of this momentous event.

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Questioning Mr. Percy

Walker Percy: *The Second Coming;* Farrar, Straus & Giroux; New York.

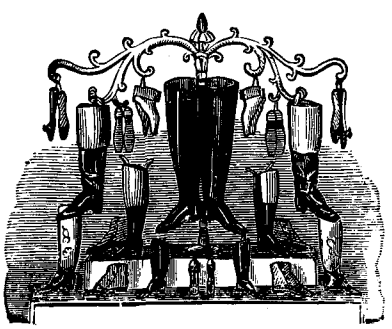
by Joseph Schwartz

Walker Percy and Saul Bellow are currently the major American novelists, and it is instructive to note that both are deeply concerned with ideas without being ideologues. While Percy lacks the tremendous variety of character and pace which characterizes Bellow's work, he has a more profound vision and a fuller comprehension of the meaning of his vision. Percy's voice has always been very much his own, and to classify him as a Southern writer is about as accurate as classifying Saul Bellow as a Midwestern writer. Percy's vigorous ideological thrust, combined with very discriminating, critical observation and a rich cast of characters in a setting he knows perfectly, explain in part his stature. In our day, for a novelist to be sure of solutions is considered unfashionable (and probably suspect). Hence, Percy's recognized stature among critics of various persuasions despite his sense of theological and moral certitude is a curious paradox.

The Second Coming rightly takes its place as a major fiction alongside his other four novels. (He has yet to produce a failure.) His new novel is set in familiar territory, the contemporary Deep South. The characters are familiar also, those confused 20th-century Southerners whose interest in and claim upon their past are so much less certain than in Faulkner, for example. Their angst is not caused by a perceived sorry contrast between past and present, but by a lived sense of the center not holding, by their perception of the religious and metaphysical chaos of their own unmoored experience.

The "second coming" refers to the reappearance of Will Barrett, hero of *The Last Gentleman* (1966), and, more importantly, to his being born again in a religious encounter with skeptical agnosticism. Barrett, now in his late forties, has made it on his own: editor of the *Law Review,* member of a top Wall Street firm, one of Ten Most Promising Young Attorneys, early retirement, man-of-the-year—"he did it all." Now he is a "talented agreeable wealthy man living in as pleasant an environment as one can imagine and yet who is thinking of putting a bullet in his brain." Camus's great question—why doesn't one commit suicide—fascinates Percy, appearing in one form or another in all his novels. The suicide of Will's father and his attempted murder of Will during one of his earlier suicide attempts are the major happenings of his life. Having survived, he is given a second chance. Will's coming to terms with suicide by way of his own version of Pascal's wager occupies about two-thirds of the novel. His "falling sickness" is a metaphor for the state of his soul and a measure of his disturbance with the sudden certain inkling he has that something is wrong, not with him, but with "the whole modern age."

Descending into a cave to play out his wager, he literally falls into Allison's life. Allie is the daughter of his sweetheart in *The Last Gentleman.* She is having severe orientation problems after escaping from a mental institution which still uses shock therapy. She must learn how to speak again as Will must learn how to live again. The pastoral setting, as well as other clues, emphasizes their characteristics as the new Adam and Eve. Each is given a second chance. "Coming" in the title is used as well in its sexual sense, which explains the remarkable and unexpected love affair and marriage that come from their meeting. The romantic union is unexpected because of the number of misleading hints that Will may be Allison's father. Unfortunately, the unintended faint odor of incest hangs over their otherwise touching love scenes.



For what Percy wants to do, the two characters must be, as they are, especially rich, dimensional—above all, in the Jamesian sense, interesting. While the usual cast of splendidly executed minor characters is present, Percy chooses to concentrate on Will and Allie. His willingness to present them as emotional cripples, disoriented and dislocated, is a great risk. Mere caricature or the grotesque could so readily have been the result. Further, Will's constant introspection could easily have turned him into a tiresome bore. Both Will and Allison, however, are deeply felt, and every rich nuance of detail is presented. Technically, only the use of the two of them as point-of-view characters is somewhat less than successful. In Part I, point of view alternates chapter by chapter between Will and Allie, and the device is successful enough to make the reader wonder why it is not used in Part II. Perhaps Percy is so close to Will that the concluding dramatic action can only be presented through him. (It would be interesting to see what Percy could do with a novel in which the author-narrator, à la Edith Wharton, is less dependent upon point-of-view characters.)

These, then, are the concerns of the narrative itself: how Will comes to discover the need for his wager; how he lives with its consequences; how he and

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Allison outwit the collective forces of a decaying society to undertake the making of a new world by "leading the most ordinary life imaginable." There are many unexpected turns in the plot and enough surprises to engage one's interest at the narrative level alone in what is basically, as Percy described it, a boy-meets-girl, boy-loses-girl, boy-gets-girl structure.

Percy's greatest appeal for me is his diagnosis of the sickness of this poor, whipped century, and the way he manages to convey that in the novel form with aesthetic grace. This is the Century of the Love of Death, as Will says. "We're all from California now." The prospect of death is the force strong enough to compel him to think seriously about the world and life, "which seemed to grow more senseless and farcical with each passing day." Death is the enemy's name, "Not the death of dying but the living death," a state that is neither life nor death, but death in life. "There is no word for it . . . I wonder if it ever happened in history before?" There are only two classes: believers (intolerable) and unbelievers (insane), people who believe everything or nothing. "Is this an age of belief . . . a great renaissance of faith after a period of crass materialism, atheism, agnosticism, liberalism, scientism? Or is it an age of madness in which everyone believes everything?" Charging that his father, an apparently courageous unbeliever, never looked for a *tertium quid,* Will determines to search, keeping his ear (slightly deaf) cocked for rumors of the transcendent. He will act because only the violent bear it away; "short of violence all is in the end impotence." He becomes a truth seeker. Like Banquo's ghost, he haunts the groaning Thanksgiving table of modernism, asking the eternal questions: *Where is it? What is missing? Where did it go? . . . God? Find him!* D'Lo's insight at the time of the suicide is prophetic. "You all alone in the world and you gon' be alone a long time but the good Lawd got something special in mind for you." Suicide may be better than life which is a living death, but "I choose life."

Having chosen, what now? There is still the problem of his (our) solipsism, which he defines as being so sucked down into himself that it takes a gunshot to knock him out of it. Three crucial happenings in the novel are related to this deification of self, the chief characteristic of the Century of the Love of Death. Will descends into the cave; he falls in love with Allison; he meets Fr. Weatherbee.

He goes into the cave from a monumental sense of pride. He believes he will be the first man to test God in such a way that he will get a personal Yes-or-No answer without any evasions. The comic result humbles him. However, the language used to describe the actual descent is directive. "He had to turn his head sideways like a baby getting through a pelvis." We are reminded immediately of Nicodemus's perplexed reply to Christ when he was told he must be born again. Can a man go back into his mother's womb and be born again? The cave incident uses the imagery of birth to describe the beginning of Will's spiritual rebirth. The imagery also recalls St. John of the Cross: the deepest descent into darkness is required to empty ourselves of the self in order to ascend into the light.

Next, Allison: his relationship with her constantly resonates with the idea of coming again, being reborn, starting anew, conquering self. After escaping from the mental institution, "She had felt like Rip Van Winkle coming down into town after a twenty-year nap." Being reborn, she must now learn speech, and she must learn literally how to live from one moment to the next. Allison is one of Percy's finest characters, the most successful female he has yet created. While Will remembers everything, she remembers nothing. Will learns from her how to become guileless, to be open to whatever message these two desert island inhabitants may find in the bottle. She has had from the beginning of her rebirth a formal statement of the great question perplexing Will. *Are you lonely? Do you want to make a new start? Have you ever had a personal encounter with our Lord and Savior?* They contrive to save each other even though the representatives of the Love of Death do their utmost to thwart them.

Finally, Fr. Weatherbee, who believes in the Apostolic Succession. He appears in various guises in other novels, Val, Fr. Boomer, Fr. Smith, not so much as a character but rather as a sign of grace. He appears to be a deus ex machina if one is not familiar with Percy's method. The person who is to get the message (grace) must be fully open to it, a sort of wanting it without knowing what it is one wants. This person, when asking how he knows he is being told the truth, must understand and accept the answer, "That is why I am here, to tell you." The deliverer makes no arguments, eschewing theological explanations, but simply asserts either by his words or by his being. Such figures are almost unattractive, as if Percy is deliberately testing the validity of their message. They can never be confused with anyone who tries to sell anybody anything. Fr. Weatherbee, living in retirement, is most reluctant to take on the likes of Will. But Will has an intuition, related to the unique historical phenomenon of the Jews, that there may be something to the Apostolic Succession, and, further, that Weatherbee may be the authority to tell him something he does not know. "You're my man. I perceive that you seem to know something." Will is like the natives of the tiny village near Mindanao where Weatherbee spent his priestly career as a missionary.

> They believe me! They believe the Gospel whole and entire, and the teachings of the church. They said that if I told them, then it must be true or I would not have gone to so much trouble.

Being as alien from the Century of the

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Love of Death as are Will and Allison, he is the proper person to give them instructions. Thus, the final word on Will:

> His heart leapt with a secret joy. What is it I want from her and Him, he wondered, not only want but must have? Is she a gift and therefore a sign of a giver? Could it be that the Lord is here, masquerading behind this simple silly holy face? Am I crazy to want both, her and Him? No, not want, must have. And will have.

There is no living novelist who has done as well as Percy in delineating the complex failures of the doctrines of liberalism. His brilliant satire has desiccated the sorry beliefs in individualism deified, knowledge as superior to wisdom, and person grouped into irresponsibility. He has been courageous enough, as well, to assert that the good life must be our present task while we await the end (purpose). "How good life must be once you get the hang of it." Getting the hang of it means doing what is expected of one, taking care of people who need it, not standing for it, throwing a gun away without looking back, being kind. The rest will follow.

What I have written so far is aimed at readers who have not read *The Last Gentleman;* it is my attempt to deal with *The Second Coming* on its own terms. Nevertheless, it is a sequel, and, as such, I have a major problem that must in fairness be given space. *The Last Gentleman* is Percy's finest novel because of the brilliant way in which Will's crucial discovery is presented. Throughout it, Will Barrett is seldom referred to by name because he has found no real identity, the perfect example of the bewildered, dislocated person. His fugue states are a metaphor for his alienation from the only sources of value he knows. It is his state of mind and heart that makes the novel's radical ending the most thrilling episode Percy has yet written. "I," he says, pointing to himself so that there can be no mistake, "Will Barrett," naming himself and celebrating the discovery of true identity. The phrase also says to the reader, "I will bear it," an even more important discovery and the point of greatest significance in the novel. He will bear life, the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune (our Hamlet), not choose suicide because he has discovered "the prime importance of the religious dimension of life." He will not only bear but rejoice in the ordinariness which the Christian must discover as the only way of re-entry into reality, the means of reaching the transcendent. Because of the incarnation, we find God in the quotidian. It is better to do something than nothing; it is good to have a family; it is better to love and be loved, to cultivate whatever talent one has, to make a contribution. Will recites a whole litany of these consequences in his remarkable exchange with Sutter: "For the first time I think I really might live like other men—rejoin the human race." He takes full responsibility for reality. The final moment, when he prevents Sutter from committing suicide, is even better than the glorious ending of *Love in the Ruins.* "Strength flowed like oil into his muscles and he ran with great joyous ten-foot antelope bounds."

What then happened to Will between his twenties and his forties? His first discovery of the meaning of existence is so carefully crafted, so joyous, so exuberant, so complete that it is unimaginable for him to marry the Marion Peabody of *The Second Coming* and waste all those years. Yet the same situation that opened *The Last Gentleman* opens *The Second Coming,* and he must go through the same process again, making exactly the same discovery that turns him into the wonderful, euphoric activist in the real world that he already experienced in full in *The Last Gentleman.* I do not know what to make of this puzzle, except to grumble that it is unfair. Percy asks in the later novel, "Is it possible for people to miss their lives in the same way one misses a plane?" Yet all the evidence in the earlier one indicates that Will did not miss the plane. Surely, Jamie's agonizing and glorious death is not a nonevent in Will's life as *The Second Coming* suggests. That kind of bitter irony would be possible to consider only if Will, in the later novel, actually committed suicide finally. Is Percy fooling with the notion that we have alternate destinies? Can the road not taken be taken at a later date? Can it be, and if so, how, that the earlier novel does not apply to the later one? However, if it does, the reader rightly wishes to know what happened to the richest cast of characters Percy has yet assembled, and he wants Will to be a true extension of the wonderful, awkward, sincere, lovable Will who could leap like an antelope. Why the second coming of Will Barrett? I put this question to Walker Percy and hope for an answer. □

Walker Percy Replies:

Dr. Schwartz objects mainly to Will Barrett's "second conversion" as being gratuitous or worse in view of his "conversion" in *The Last Gentleman.* I would point out that at the end of *TLG,* Will did not really know what was going on with Jamie's baptism and death. He has to ask Sutter: "What was going on back there?" Thus, while it was clear that Jamie asked for baptism, Will gives no indication of an overt understanding of what Father Boomer was talking about, let alone accepting it. It was my intention to leave him somewhat up in the air, capable of returning to marry Kitty and going to work for Confederate Chevrolet. The only positive element in his experience is his fastening on Sutter as knowing something he, Will, does not know. But even if Will's "conversion" in *TLG* had been bona fide, who is to say it "takes" and "takes" for good—except a born-again Baptist who believes one is saved once and for all. I'm sure Dr. Schwartz has heard of Gabriel Marcel's "second conversion," a kind of belated coming to oneself—anyhow this is what I had in mind, and if it didn't work for Dr. Schwartz, then it didn't work and the novelist has failed.

—Walker Percy

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God, Reason & the Redistribution of Income

Robert L. Heilbroner: *Marxism: For and Against;* W. W. Norton & Co.; New York.

Michael Harrington: *Decade of Decision;* Simon & Schuster; New York.

by William E. Cage

It is a perverse tribute to human intelligence that Marxism is still discussed in intellectually respectable circles. It is testimony to our naiveté and gullibility that we allow the title "Marxist state" to be applied to almost every cheap dictatorship which has been established since 1950. And yet the current upsurge in Marxist literature provides an exemplary case of how fundamental and necessary freedom is to the human experience. Works on Marx—whether they reflect the plausible structures of Heilbroner or the formless emotionalism of Harrington—need to be examined on their merits and should be judged where they are found wanting, regardless of the philosophical disposition of the reader.

That is to say, both of the books reviewed here leave this writer with a sense of tired frustration. Have not these ideas already been laid to rest thousands of times? Are these writers (and their readers) not aware of the millions of hours which have been futilely spent attempting to justify (or even just explain) Marx's peculiar analysis? Whether they are or not, the grip that Marxism has on today's world makes it important to treat these ideas and their authors fairly, and perhaps in the process we can diagnose the malaise from which the Western world suffers.

Heilbroner has always been an excellent writer. He has a gift for explaining complex ideas in a manner which makes them understandable to the lay public. However, even Heilbroner is taxed to the limits when trying to explain Marx. *Marxism: For and Against* is the best place this reviewer knows to begin studying Marx. Heilbroner treats Marx's philosophical method, the core of what is in fact Marxism, and even tests Marx's theories (not very carefully) against reality. He goes further and examines what it would mean if Marx's prescriptions (as distinct from his *de*scriptions) were actually instituted in human society.

Dr. Cage is a corporate economist in Missouri.

"If the scores of books published in the past few years do not confirm a case of Marxism revived, Heilbroner's book certainly will."

—*The Progressive*

Heilbroner understands Marx and Marxism, and his book can serve as a reliable reference for anyone who wants to explore these subjects. In fact, if there were any chance that it would be read, Heilbroner's work would be an excellent gift for anyone who preaches the virtues of Marxism. A passage should serve to illustrate the point:

> . . . it seems to me as unlikely that a socialist civilization will be fundamentally interested in what we call liberty as that a bourgeois civilization will be fundamentally interested in what its predecessors called piety . . . The practice of Marxism is not an effort to create a kind of 'socialism' that embodies the highest ideals of contemporary, bourgeois society. It is, rather, the effort to bring into being a new social order, *different from and beyond bourgeois society,* and therefore embodying institutions or ideals that may not be attractive, or even acceptable, to those of us who are situated in, and profoundly influenced by, bourgeois thought.

Heilbroner is no antagonist of Marx, and he could possibly be called a supporter—but he nonetheless *understands* what he supports. That is in sharp contrast to virtually every other Marxist, or quasi-Marxist, at large today, including Michael Harrington.

There can be no doubt that Michael Harrington "cares." He is genuinely concerned with the poor, the powerless, the downtrodden. Unfortunately, there is also no doubt in this reviewer's opinion that Harrington has adopted an essentially Marxist viewpoint in analyzing and interpreting the world of today. That is unfortunate for Harrington's own concerns because Marxism does not offer an adequate or valid explanation of economic events, and to rely on Marxism to identify the means for solving world poverty is analogous to trying to orbit a satellite while thinking that the universe revolves around the earth. The entire theoretical structure simply will not permit the objective to be reached. It is quite likely that Harrington could learn something about Marx from Heilbroner. Harrington covers 300 pages with obtuse, turgid writing, falling victim to a common debating-society error (you can prove anything if you offer enough quotes and citations in favor of it). He reaches his conclusion, and it is not a very remarkable one. It is "that there must be a structural transformation of corporate power. And the key to that development is the democratization of the investment function." It would be simpler to say that the government should be in charge of making all investment decisions. How will this cure the sickness of poverty? How will government investment reduce income inequality? Well, that is how Marx gets dragged into *Decade of Decision.* It is impossible to set forth the logic to the argument because there isn't any. That's why Harrington should read Heilbroner.

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Return, though, to the assumption advanced by Harrington that most of his readers (and even his critics) today accept unquestioningly. The assumption is that income *ought* to be more equally distributed. It would be easy in reply to resort to the economic argument that income differences are a spur to productivity, and that if everyone had the same income no one would want to do the tough or demanding work. Harrington, however, shows either his intellectual agility or a simple inability to follow the argument. He "answers" this economic argument (favoring an unequal distribution of income) by claiming that if there is a productivity problem, it arises because businesses make investments only when they generate a profit. Government would not be bound by such a stodgy rule and would therefore be free to make investments which would benefit society (and somehow increase productivity as well). The question of how to get the tough jobs done is left unanswered, unless we are to assume that the government will first invest in machines to do those jobs.

The economic argument is valid and no assertions or intellectual gymnastics will change that. Heilbroner implies that Marxism is in fact designed for a creature quite different from mankind, and if Harrington's schemes are ever to work, they will most likely require repopulating the earth with these different creatures. I am not out of sympathy with Harrington's goals—but his means for achieving those goals are simply inappropriate. And Harrington will always choose inappropriate means because he does not understand the problem.

There is, however, another aspect of the unequal-income argument which seems overlooked. Harrington, Marxists (for it is income inequality which motivates most Marxists), and a large proportion of our elected representatives (and perhaps even of our population!) are concerned only with *results.* Harrington is as much a "bottom-line" man as is the president of any large corporation in that they both are concerned with *results.* Harrington doesn't like to see people living in poverty (neither do I); he thinks life would be more pleasant for the poor if they had the income of, say, the average family in the U.S. (who would deny that); and I suspect that if Harrington understood Marx for the inept socioeconomic philosopher he was, Harrington would not long concentrate on turning investment decisions over to the government. It is possible that Harrington would even today settle for something considerably less than an equal distribution of income. There is reasonable certainty, though, that Harrington's sights would still be set on Washington, that whatever income redistribution was to occur would be done by *government.* Now, even if someone ever demonstrates that the government could actually accomplish a relatively effective redistribution of income (toward the poor, presumably), the central question remains: what in fact have you accomplished by a redistribution of income under government auspices? Even if we end up with more equal income, what have we done?

"[*Decade of Decision* is] an excellent book; libraries will want multiple copies."
—*Library Journal*

What we will have done is to accept the idea that the purpose of life is to *have* rather than to *strive.* We will have moved to the position that it is the possession and consumption of material goods that makes it worthwhile to get up in the morning. That position is untenable. That position may be one which Marx's new creature will be able to hold, but it is contrary to man as he is now constituted. We do find meaning and challenge in work. We do find self-fulfillment and personal growth in even menial work. We do become "more human" as a result of participating in the work force. But wait a minute. Harrington might rightfully question whether we could not continue to hold on to our work ethic but simply maintain a different structure of income. At that point we return to the question of *how* the redistribution occurs. If the government redistributes income, it must be taken from some to give to others. As the government can only undertake such actions as a result of its coercive powers (*i.e.,* there is an implied gun pointed at the taxpayers), there is no charity or morality involved. In fact, even if I support the redistribution, there is no quality of a moral choice in it for me because I had no choice. There is no virtue in being robbed by a poor thief.

When the moral content is removed from the income-redistribution act, then we can *only* be concerned with the end results—and that is why Harrington has to be considered as one of the strongest "bottom-line" advocates. So again, what is accomplished by redistributing income when the government does it? About all that can be said is that some people are probably better off and some are worse off—not a statement with any moral or even ethical content. If Harrington were in charge, those whom *he* felt should have more would get more, but at the expense of those whom he felt should have less. An income-redistribution program which depends for its final justification on the fact that someone simply thinks the distribution of income should be different is not a program to be taken seriously.

Income redistribution, when it is done by government, suffers from two major flaws: first, it flies in the face of the work ethic, even when done on a "modest" scale; and second, it removes the moral quality from the redistribution act. Both of those problems are absent when the redistribution is done on the basis of private choice.

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For those who take seriously the admonition that we are to care for one another, the only valid response is to give of their own substance so that others may benefit. True, if such giving were indiscriminate, it would also do injury to the work ethic. That sort of indiscriminate giving, though, is much less likely to occur in private charity than in government handouts. Most people—whether they support a foundation or simply contribute to their church or the Salvation Army—are very much aware that the best help you can give someone is to help him help himself. The morality issue in income redistribution is, of course, resolved. If we choose to heed the Biblical commands regarding aid for the poor, the *choice* is ours. We do *not* face the alternative of imprisonment if we do not cooperate, which means the choice is a genuine choice! That is, we can choose between *more* for ourselves and more for someone else. When the choice is between *less* for ourselves (as imprisonment would be) and *more* for someone else, the choice is hardly a genuine one. As an aside, it is interesting to examine the Biblical commandments because so many socialists are fond of claiming that God is on the side of redistribution. These commands, from both Old and New Testaments, are aimed at *individuals,* not governments. I have yet to find an injunction which says "take from your neighbor and give to the poor."

The question of income redistribution is central to socialist and Marxist thought. It is the underlying theme which is supposed to vindicate the tortures, murders and confiscatory schemes of a myriad of two-bit tyrants. After all, can we not forgive a few such acts if the end result is to help the poor? This type of sloppy thinking, of failure to lay out the real issues, allows a lot of nonsense to be taken seriously. Such is clearly the case with Mr. Harrington's work. Harrington, though, stumbles on more stones than these. He also trips over the reasoning of Marx. He assumes the "structural flaws" Marx said existed in capitalism without analyzing their validity. He goes on to beat the drum for a reorganization of the economy along essentially Marxist lines, presumably without realizing that Marx needed a new type of creature to make his system work.

In all, Harrington's book is a prime example of socialist thought, which means it is the same, old, tired stuff. Heilbroner is a different matter. If a reader takes the time to work his way through this thin but dense volume, a good understanding of Marx can be obtained. Now, there is good reason to question just how much that is worth, but if you want it—Heilbroner has it. □

Our Poky Little Universe

Ann Beattie: *Falling in Place;* Random House; New York.

Johanna Kaplan: *O My America!;* Harper & Row; New York.

Stuart Dybek: *Childhood and Other Neighborhoods;* Viking Press; New York.

by Gary S. Vasilash

Peter Frampton is a British rock star (or superstar or whatever his stellar appellation) who is quite important to a character in Ann Beattie's *Falling in Place.* Indeed, Mary Knapp, 15, wears a Frampton T-shirt, plays his records, and kisses and caresses his poster image. As rock stars go, Frampton is good-looking: blond curly hair, pool-like eyes, a boyish face and a slight build—there can be little wonder that young girls "fall" for Frampton since he resembles a Sir Galahad, and he even tends to play up the knightly image at times *(e.g.,* his girlfriend is termed his "lady love"). But the Sir Galahad of today is different from the one in the days of yore, when a knight defended a world for the sake of purity. The original Galahad died a virgin; he would be as common in today's rock world as the unicorn. And there are no unicorns in *Falling in Place.*

Frampton is not the only hero out of real life for the young characters in the novel. A checklist—or a few back issues of *People* magazine—is almost necessary for keeping track of them. Diane Von Furstenburg and other members of the haute-couture set are there, too, in the New Haven, Connecticut dreams. Mary's girlfriend Angela, who is doing her damnedest to be violated (by wearing the tightest clothes she can squeeze over her budding body and by drinking vodka out of a flask on the way to a party so she'll be more loquacious with the boys), worships the jet set. And she even performs a ritual sacrifice each day to their images in *Vogue, Cosmopolitan* and the rest. That is:

> She was waiting exactly half an hour, as she always did after dinner, for the food to settle in her stomach, but not to be digested. Then she would turn up the volume on the stereo and go into the bathroom and stick her finger down her throat to vomit so she would stay thin.

The rationale? " 'Models do it.' Angela said. 'Lots of people do it.' " Lots of people who aren't 15 years old.

Frampton and Von Furstenburg represent trends, social ephemera. When Ms. Beattie was writing about Frampton, he was at his apogee of success. He has since fallen into a black hole, replaced by what are termed "New Wave" musicians, who are now being ushered out by the post-punk rockers. And while Von Furstenburg and those of her silk ilk seem firmly established, it is un-

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doubtedly only a matter of time until the sartorial rug is pulled out from under them and they fall into the ready-to-wear racks, replaced by the up-and-coming. One indication of the decline of the current fashion moguls is the fact that their names and initials can be seen on the backs, fronts and behinds of those who obviously frequent K-Mart rather than Lord & Taylor for their fashion needs. How many fashion models have fallen from the covers of top magazines since the novel was written—or since this essay was penned?

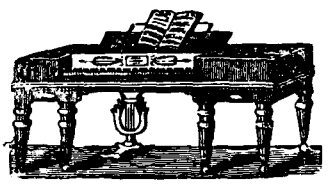
Mary's 10-year-old brother doesn't have a Peter Frampton. He doesn't like being disturbed, so he spends much of his time in a tree. And if not there, he's someplace eating and eating and eating—even if his stomach pains him from being overloaded or if his pants are biting into his flabby flesh. He and Mary claim to hate each other, as many of today's siblings do, and they display a remarkable vindictiveness. John Joel doesn't really have any friends, but if he called anyone "friend," it would be a boy named Parker.

Parker also likes to eat, and he matches John Joel in having very few interests. But Parker likes to play what he no doubt considers practical jokes, such as rolling up the ends of Salems to resemble joints and smoking them in public, or, more privately, sticking a pin through his mother's diaphragm. And he does like to read—or look at—magazines such as *Hustler* and comic books that show pictures of animals in perverted poses. Parker is the agent who leads to what may be considered the climax of the novel *(may* be because there's no sense of rising or falling action). While in John Joel's tree, Parker pulls out a pistol he has taken out of a box of obscene little trinkets that his father had secreted away. Parker plays with the gun, pretending to shoot birds, claiming to be like a character in a James Bond movie. Mary and Angela happen to be walking toward the tree. John Joel tells Parker to put the gun away. Parker tells him not to worry about it; naturally it's not loaded, Parker says. John Joel takes the gun away from him. On a whim, he calls out his sister's name, points the gun at her, and pulls the trigger. The inevitable happens.

Are these the children of the late 70's and early 80's? In some cases—such as this one that Ann Beattie describes with a brilliance that inspires uneasiness—the answer is yes. However, they are not precocious little Lolitas nor depraved Caligulas, but rather children who do not have any other role models than those who are hailed in the pages of magazines and on the screens of television sets. They are children who lack anybody who will slap their wrists or any other parts of their anatomy, saying, "That behavior is wrong." While children once admired and imitated the likes of Nancy Drew or Tom Swift—and did either ever even kiss anyone?—some of today's youth fantasize on the likes of real people who have become so distorted and grotesque through the process of being "hyped" that they resemble comic-book characters. And with the moral permissiveness that is now so natural, the fantasy of a 15-year-old girl becomes something straight out of a *Cosmopolitan* feature:

> If Peter Frampton went on a picnic, Mary was sure he went naked, in a speedboat, to some private island at midnight, with the lady love and a bottle of champagne. He wouldn't be seen dead in a button-down shirt hanging out of a pair of baggy jeans, with a bag full of things to have a barbeque with a wife and three children trailing behind him.

Now there's no reason to think that Mr. Frampton wouldn't go in a button-down shirt, etc., but a socially accepted aura about him and many others makes



riding naked in a speedboat a plausible pastime.

While all this indicates that there is something tragically wrong with these children, it must be pointed out that *Falling in Place* is essentially about adults—at least those who are physiologically, not psychologically, grown up.

The title of the book comes from a comment Mary makes. Her parents, John and Louise, are having a skirmish in a restaurant, a minor battle in the war known as their marriage. Mary tries to create a diversion by making an offhand comment about something she's reading for a summer-school class (she's an all-A student gone bad): ". . . that's what *Vanity Fair* is like. Things just fall into place." Her father thinks that's one of the most profound utterances he has ever heard. But more on him later. There are several other references to falling throughout the novel: Skylab's impending fall; DC-10's crashing; people falling in and out of love; old friends dropping in; fallout from Three Mile Island; dreams of falling.

However, it seems to me that the "falling" that goes on in the novel resembles tripping more than anything else, which brings to mind the sense of the comic. As Henri Bergson showed in his essay, *Laughter,* a person falling is funny only if we recognize that it was the result of some sort of mechanical inelasticity in that person. And he made a point that can be used as something of a skeleton key to the novel: ". . . the comic comes into being just when society and the individual, freed from the worry of self-preservation, begin to regard themselves as works of art." As shown, the children try to do precisely that. But the adults in the novel concentrate so hard on trying to resemble the cool crowd in New York City and other fashionable capitals that they fall on their faces by tripping over the slightest obstacle presented by "real" life.

In a sense, Ann Beattie has written a comedy of manners. There are no

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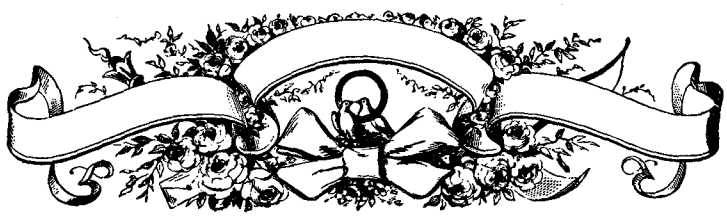

witty lines or farcical situations, but she points out how those things that make up the "right" society in that corridor centered in New York City and running up through the posh suburbs in Connecticut—the conventions, manners, fashions and opinions—are out of sync with regard to living in the real world rather than in that created by the media. It's not that the glittering world didn't always exist, but the society-page news is now front-page news, and everybody likes to see his name in the papers.

The characters often act like automatons rather than people. But they are depicted so adroitly that it can be hard to detect the humor. A few years back, there was a popular doll on the market that would utter one of several messages when you pulled a string in its side. In the novel, when something happens, people act in an equally fixed manner. For example, if they want to express an emotion, they typically do it with a message from a rock song. "Heart of Glass" by the New Wave group Blondie is heard throughout the novel, and the characters (many of them, that is) identify with it. It should be noted that the music recorded by that group has a mechanical precision; the joy of music is foreign to it. When Mary's summer-school teacher hears about the shooting, she wonders if she should quote Elvis Costello's song "Accidents Will Happen." Costello used to be a computer programmer before becoming a rocker. The children in *Falling in Place* aren't the only ones who have a fixation on whatever is in vogue.

The most comic figure is John Knapp, father of Mary, John Joel and Brandt, and husband of Louise. Biological father and nominal husband. Thinking about wishes, he knows that his would be "that his family all disappear in a puff of smoke, and that he could start all over again with Nina." Nina is John's lady love, a woman in her midtwenties who lives in the City. She's better all around for a life of art. John's family—to use the word loosely—lives in New Haven. That is, the family except for the baby, Brandt, and John. They live in Rye, New York, with John's mother. That setup just "sort of" happened, and it makes John happy because it's an easier commute into his job at an ad agency and closer to Nina's apartment. That's as far as John's sense of responsibility goes. He thinks he is a slick character, that his family has no idea of what his other identity is, but he is only deceiving himself, and that deception is something of a banana peel in his path.

John also gets his coordinates for thinking from the hip scene. That is, he has a problem with Louise, so he thinks about it in terms of characters from the film *Saturday Night Fever*—and turns on his radio and gets the appropriate disco beat to reverberate in his empty skull. He looks at a photograph of his daughter which was taken a few years back at the beach at Nantucket. She is wearing a bathing suit with gingerbread men on it. Does he look at this and think: gingerbread men, nursery rhymes and fairy tales? No. It reminds him of the character Mr. Bill from the "Saturday Night Live" TV program, the dough-like figure that is routinely torn apart, blown up and otherwise destroyed. John sees himself as a member of the trendy set, as living the "right" life.

His family wants to make a return to Nantucket, perhaps in an effort to salvage whatever is left. He thinks: "What would I do with them in Nantucket? Go to the beach. Sail. Watch clouds change shape. Buy fudge. Post cards." That's not chic enough for his lifestyle. He'd rather sit around in Nina's perfect little apartment, smoke pot, and go to one of the "right" places to eat. Or, of course, he could go to Nantucket with Nina and do the sail-clouds-fudge routine, which would then be precisely the thing to do.

When his son shoots his daughter and his wife tells him their farce of a marriage is over—when John finally slips on the banana peel—his shoddy little world slides out from under him. He doesn't act like any sort of bulwark for his children who need help; his only reaction is to think over and over again, "His son had shot his daughter." Mary, wounded, with a bullet hole in her, could get more comfort from a Peter Frampton poster. He doesn't help his wife during the troubled period. Instead, he hops in his car and drives fast to the City. That's one of the things he likes to do on occasion: drive fast—it makes him feel that he's taking risks. He gets to his mistress' apartment early in the morning; she opens the door wearing a robe that's partially open, and he sees behind her a man who has obviously spent the night. Does John charge in and take control of the situation? Hardly. He ends up drinking coffee with his rival. Violence would be gauche—or perhaps he spent himself on the fast drive.

Should John Joel take his father as a role model and hope to grow up and be just like dear old (constantly trying to be young) Dad? How about Mary and her mother? Louise does little else besides idolize one of her girlfriends who has a Ph.D., teaches at N.Y.U., and spends her time explicating fairy tales from a feminist point of view. Teachers were once thought to be moral leaders for young people, but not in the comedy that's the world today. Cynthia Forrest,

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Bryn Mawr grad working on her Ph.D. at Yale (higher degrees are obviously "in"), lives with a man (who turns out to be John's rival, crossing paths being a characteristic of a comedy of manners) whom she just happened to bump into (she thinks, "Actually she just fell into things because she wasn't cynical enough"), and is humble enough to wish "she was an ordinary person with an ordinary mind." Just the sort of person to teach young people.

The world in *Falling in Place* is populated by those who are concerned with style, with artifice. Below the glittering, trendy façade, inside the pleasure palaces with walls built by the smoke of marijuana (and it's interesting to note that Parker pretends to smoke it, while John, Nina, Cynthia, etc.—his elders—actually do), there is a bankrupt world. Yet they keep spending to maintain the illusion. But as Ann Beattie shows, they are spending what would be the patrimony of the children.

At the end of a comedy, there is usually an epithalamium. In this world, the wedding song has a divorce as its prelude, and chances are it will be a false wedding: it is so much more convenient to live together. Although it seems that some of the characters—John and Nina, Cynthia and her lover—will live happily ever after, the reality of their lives shows that for them, forever means until they change their minds.

* * *

On a plane to New York City in May, I happened to sit next to two well-dressed, middle-aged women who were apparently on their way to visit the Picasso retrospective. That deduction has nothing of Sherlock Holmes in it; they were busily reading the write-ups on the artist and the exhibition that appeared in *Newsweek* and *New York* magazines. Nothing like getting the real meaty details about art when you have to fly a few hundred miles to see it. The women chatted in italics: *("Oh, don't you just Love that!"* one said, pointing to a 2" x 4" reproduction of a massive work), and I couldn't help but overhear parts of it—not that I'm an aural snoop, but the seating accommodations on a plane make it impossible even for the most noble not to audit something. One line will remain forever in mind, typifying the people who fly from Detroit (actually, one of its posh suburbs) to New York to see art work they've read about in *Newsweek.* During a discussion of a dinner party to which guests bring something—"potluck" is what most call it—one said to the other, "Three-bean salad is such a *cop-out!* all you have to do is open three cans." Perhaps I have the naiveté of Miranda, but all I can think is, "O brave new world, That has such people in't!"

O My America! by Johanna Kaplan is one of the things that will keep that comment in my mind. The title of the novel is from Donne's "To his Mistress Going to Bed," which reads, in part:

> License my roving hands and let them go
> Before, behind, between, above, below.
> O my America, my new found land,
> My kingdom safeliest when with one man manned,
> My mine of precious stones, my empery,
> How blessed am I in this discovering thee!

In a sense, the discovery of what is historically American—dissent—is the subject of the novel. That is, Merry Slavin, 28, one of the many offspring of Ezra Slavin ("Author, critic, teacher, think-

In the forthcoming issue of *Chronicles of Culture!*

Toward Conservatism with a Human Face

"Podhoretz frequently speaks of the danger to the United States as 'Finlandization'—a quiet, humiliating subordination, rather than total defeat . . . But Finland's position is not comparable to that of the West. The Finns did not choose 'Finlandization' through cowardice, stupidity or insanity; it was the best deal they could get under the circumstances, and they were willing to fight to keep such independence as they had. A policy of surrender by the West has no such obvious stopping place. As things stand now, it looks like the West has become so debilitated—rationally and morally—that it's doubtful whether *any* deal can be made, let alone one which might be rooted in Western self-interest, or which may possess any sound survival instinct."

—from "Podhoretz's Monition" by Alan J. Levine

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er, pacifist and fighter," says the public-television personality who does a documentary on him), begins to realize what her father lived for, what he engendered in society and how he became the darling of the anti-three-bean-salad set. Her enlightenment comes after her father's death; he had a heart attack at an anti-war rally in 1972.

Ezra Slavin was the type of man who was extremely critical of society, but who didn't do much to change it. If hot air could do more than make balloons fly, he would have been a wonder worker. Slavin was the type of person who put on his rose-colored glasses back in the 1930's and never took them off—the type who believed that social justice and equality would be achieved via the steam-roller process: everyone is flattened except, of course, the driver: the Slavinesque intellectual. Not bad work if you can get it. But *work* is an unmentionable word to such people. The reason: it leads to the hoarding of material goods, and, as we all know, property is theft. The Slavins of the world have been spilling ink about that for years.

However, since their concern is with America, Proudhon won't do. Instead, Ez Slavin employed Theodore Parker (1810-1860) as his paradigm. Parker was a theologian and social reformer, a transcendentalist who wailed and moaned about the conditions of his day, along with his associates on the *Dial*. During that period he and other intellectuals centered in Boston spent a great deal of their time trying to determine how best to integrate themselves into the world of the common man. So, in effect, with those intellectuals criticizing the crass materialism and social inequalities and their attempts to become one with the "people," their link to the so-called proletariat writers of the 30's is painfully obvious. The names and issues have changed, but that's all: a change in content but not in form. By taking it one more step, to America during the war in Vietnam, that concept is still further underscored; Slavin simply switched from the Spanish Civil War to another place and time.

One of the things that tied Slavin to Parker was the idea of getting in touch with nature, and that romantic notion was as ill-defined in 1970 as it was over 100 years ago. Technology was typically the enemy because no good could come from it: it separated man from Eden. That notion is quite typically where Slavin and his ilk detach themselves from the people whom they are trying to get next to.

Johanna Kaplan provides a delightful example of this as she shows cranky Ez Slavin trying to find one of his childhood delights, tomato herring. First he tried the posh Zabar's, a gourmet food shop in New York. There he was shown two cans of fish, one from Scotland and the other from Scandinavia, both, in his estimation, overpriced frauds. So he decided to go back to his childhood neighborhood, the Lower East Side. He entered a store and found it quite crowded; he couldn't understand why. It had to be explained to him that it was the Passover season. So much for his Jewish heritage. Then he was outraged that he had to take a number to be served. Being antiorder, he rudely pushed his way to the front of the line and demanded tomato herring. The counterman pointed to a can of sardines in tomato sauce. Slavin became even more incensed. The counterman patiently explained that although everyone called it tomato herring, it had always been sardines, and "it *always* came in cans. It always came [from] Del Monte." Slavin called him a cheat and stormed out. So much for being in touch with his roots and his people. I suspect that Slavin pictured the creation of tomato herring in a pastoral setting: the swains and maidens catching the fish that leap from ponds and harvesting the tomatoes from plants that resemble Jack's beanstalk. But a can? Never!

This sort of attitude is easily adopted by well-established liberals, and I suppose it could be considered to be responsible for the anti-three-bean-salad stance and the pronatural way of life (*e.g.*, "organic" foods and solar energy). The well-heeled elite can stand around at parties in finely appointed apartments munching ethnic or natural foods, decrying the war in Vietnam (in the novel) or nuclear energy today. There's no risk involved for them. It is as safe as going to see Picasso in 1980, just as it was to see King Tut last year. But Tut this year or Pablo next? Heavens, no! And it should be noted that, during Parker's day, Sylvester Graham touted his "natural" bread as being an answer to society's ills. From graham crackers to granola, not much has changed.

While many consider cans to be disposable—you can be sure that Slavin didn't—for Slavin it was people who were disposable. Undoubtedly antistrip mining, he had no compunction against mining the precious stones to which Dr. Donne refers. That is, Slavin had four wives (only one left him a widower, and one he didn't actually wed) and six children. Wives were disposed of when their places were usurped by someone who was (a) better looking or (b) more ideologically sound (*i.e.*, they followed the Slavin party line more closely). Children were, for the most part, ignored; they were too much bother. Funny how those who intend to build a whole new world have such difficulty keeping their own homes in order.

The result of this cavalier approach to family life is brilliantly limned by Kaplan in the character Ffrenchy Meisel, one of Ezra's daughters by his common-law wife. Born in 1950, Ffrenchy spent her teen years being concerned with "processed" foods, joining communes and mystical-religious groups (she wore a stylish purple jumpsuit to help her meditate on, or "get into," purple), and being against just about whatever was going. She had a daughter to whom she gave the name Mountain Spring. The child's surname should have been Stranger, but her father "is just totally not into posses-

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siveness," and besides that, when the tot went to school, the other kids might give her a hard time about the name Stranger. But Mountain Spring? No problem.

Slavin was a hero to Ffrenchy's peers. He was antiestablishment and against the war—a real guru. But what he tried to tell them about political consciousness was generally lost in transmission, and their feedback and lifestyle were equally confusing to Slavin. Yet these are the children of the utopia which he had a hand in building. They deserve each other.

Johanna Kaplan has done a commendable job in *O My America!* Although she does seem to hesitate and pull back at both the beginning and end of the novel (offering almost an apologia for Ez Slavin), the center holds together.

* * *

Another fine work comes from the second city of America. *Childhood and Other Neighborhoods,* by Stuart Dybek, is a collection of stories primarily about growing up in a Polish neighborhood in Chicago. Dybek is a perceptive observer of the little things that, in the aggregate, comprise one's life. These are not stories of epiphany or of passage rites, but studies of life. Those who grew up in the type of area he describes—or who spent any time in one—will smile with a recognition of events and attitudes. Those who never had the experiences will be introduced to them, and they are something that should not be missed.

Dybek does not deal with social or political "issues" as such. One story does concern a social worker, but it deals with an individual's approach to the problem of charity: how can the worker justify not handing out all of his wages in the form of "spare change" to the people in the neighborhood in which he works? Generally, this book gives one the feeling of George Orwell meeting Donald Barthelme.

Many of the stories deal with the down and out, outsiders or those who are overlooked by the urban-renewal enthusiasts who rip up neighborhoods with monies from federal grants. One story, "The Palatski Man," follows the ragmen, hobos and peddlers to where they go after a long day on the streets of the city. It's the type of thing Orwell wrote about in 1931. "The Apprentice" follows a young boy and his uncle as they scavenge the city's highways at dawn, collecting for a restaurant animals that have been run over, as well as anything else they can find—a subject which one might expect to be handled by Barthelme.

Other stories detail the changing world, how the old and new don't flow into each other, but have a chasm between them. "Blood Soup" concerns the adventures of two young boys as they try to find some duck's blood to make *czarnina,* a mixture that also includes carrots, apples, prunes, flour, sour cream, parsley and thyme. Their grandmother is dying, and she feels that the soup will infuse new life into her wasting body. Once a common staple, it has become impossible to find, even though the boys go to incredible lengths in their search. This is the world of the FDA and Campbell's.

Dybek is a talented writer of short stories. For the most part, his vignettes have so much integrity that trying to paraphrase or discuss them is like trying to explain a joke: it just doesn't work. But they serve to explain in their own way what urban America was—and is—all about. They tell of things that should not be forgotten. □

The *Weltanschauung* Mishmash

G. Gordon Liddy: *Will: The Autobiography of G. Gordon Liddy;* St. Martin's Press; New York.

by James J. Thompson, Jr.

The G. Gordon Liddy Fan Club could probably meet in a telephone booth. A large hall would be required to accommodate those who rue the day in 1930 that Mr. Liddy's mother brought him into the world. Barring a reversal of that biological fact, Liddy's detractors would at least like to see him knocked down a notch or two. These people will be sorely disappointed with *Will: The Autobiography of G. Gordon Liddy,* for the Gordon Liddy of 1980 remains unbowed and unchastened, despite the ruin of a promising career and over four years of incarceration in various federal penitentiaries. "I became what I wanted to be." No quarter asked, none given: G. Gordon Liddy, villain of Watergate and the man liberals love to hate.

Do we really need another book on Watergate? Just about everyone save Richard Nixon's pastry chef has had his say, and I fully expect that gentleman to weigh in any day now with his account. I, for one, am thoroughly weary of the whole business, especially of those lugubrious tracts by self-righteous liberals who believe that before Watergate sullied the record, the American political arena was the playground of twelve-year-old virgins in spotless white dresses (Lyndon Johnson—wherever his soul may reside these days—must enjoy this immensely). Were Liddy's *Will* simply another rehash of Watergate, I would gladly pass it up in favor of an afternoon of watching haircuts at the local barbershop. But Gordon Liddy—silent so long while the John Deans and Jeb Magruders whimpered and whined—has written a book that not only recounts his part in the swirling events that toppled Richard Nixon, but also paints a self-portrait that by turns elicits admiration and provokes outrage.

Under the aegis of the Committee to

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Re-elect the President, Liddy enthusiastically directed the establishment of an extralegal intelligence unit charged with undermining the Democrats' efforts to unseat Richard Nixon in 1972. Why did Liddy, an ex-FBI agent and former hardline assistant district attorney, eagerly agree to violate the law? Money? Fame? Political preferment? The allurements that make most men burn with a white-hot lust left Liddy cold. Liddy acted for a startlingly simple reason: patriotism. "To permit the thought, spirit, life-style, and ideas of the 60's movement to achieve power and become the official way of life of the United States was a thought as offensive to me as was the thought of surrender to a career Japanese soldier in 1945. It was unthinkable, an unspeakable betrayal." An admirable motive no doubt, but does it justify egregious lawlessness? Liddy defends his actions by contending that domestic warfare existed in the United States in the late 1960's, an internecine strife that pitted the defenders of the good and the right against "the radical left and whole drug-besotted 1960's 'movement.' " In such a crisis the law becomes "inoperative," and the man of honor and courage must move swiftly to crush the barbarians.

The temptation arises to peg Liddy in one of two ways: either as a crazed fanatic, or as a cynical political operative in search of a rationale adequate to justify the disruption of the electoral process. Neither will suffice, though, for the whole course of Liddy's adult life supports his view of Watergate. Both as an FBI agent and as a prosecuting attorney, Liddy saw himself as the defender of America from external enemies and internal subversives. The upheavals of the 1960's—urban riots, a near-treasonous peace movement and the rise of the drug culture—naturally struck Liddy as parts of a gigantic conspiracy to destroy what he loved and had consistently defended. Did Liddy overreact? Did he mistake a series of mild domestic disorders as a dire threat to America? The black thugs who ravaged America's cities, the peace demonstrators who waved Vietcong flags, and the acid heads who preached the gospel of "tune out and turn on" did indeed wish to bring America to her knees. Many of these despicable creatures, along with abortion advocates, homosexual activists and militant feminists, rallied to the banners of George McGovern, a silly, naive man who lacked the intelligence and will to discern the vicious intent of many of his followers.

In times of grave peril to the Republic good men must sometimes risk all to save what they believe in and let history be the judge. So reasoned Gordon Liddy in the spring of 1972. Granted the correctness of Liddy's assessment of the nature of the threat posed by the "60's movement," did the situation necessitate an appeal to a higher law than that of the legal and electoral system that sheltered those who would destroy Gordon Liddy's America? In retrospect, the answer must be a resounding "No!" The good sense of the American people asserted itself and sent George McGovern scurrying back to the wastelands of South Dakota to lick his wounds. But Gordon Liddy did not foresee this dénouement when he set out to combat the forces of destruction. Had events gone differently, Liddy might now be enshrined in the halls of American patriotism. As it stands, his ill-fated mission confirms one of the bedrock principles of American conservatism: one must obey the law and accept the workings of the legitimately constituted political system. In resorting to lawlessness, Liddy subverted the very system he sought to protect.

Gordon Liddy's problem lies much deeper than an overeager patriotism, though. As a sickly, scrawny and fear-ridden child filled with "self-loathing," Liddy determined to transform himself physically and to triumph over his fears. A common enough impulse—witness Theodore Roosevelt; but the source of Liddy's inspiration and the lengths to which he drove himself to achieve self-mastery will raise a few eyebrows. Young Gordon sat spellbound for hours beside the family short-wave radio listening to the frenzied speeches of Adolf Hitler. Inspired by Hitler's revitalization of a once weak and humiliated German nation, Liddy seized upon the thought that he, too, could be strong and masterful: "The world opened up to me. *I could become anything I wanted to be.*"

A man should not be condemned for having suffered in his childhood from a febrile imagination that danced to the electrifying oratory of a master demagogue. But the effects of this did not evanesce as Liddy grew to manhood; he retained a lifelong fascination with nazi Germany and a preoccupation with force, violence, power and the triumph of the will. Machines, with their awesome might and invulnerability, gripped his fantasies, and he began an enduring love affair with guns (in *Will* he treats us to a group portrait of fourteen pistols he has packed at one time or another). Admitting that "I am inclined to think in German terms," Liddy repeatedly refers to nazi Germany. Both his Jesuit teachers at Fordham and the corps of FBI agents remind him of Heinrich Himmler's *Schutzstaffel;* he recalls fondly the *"über alles* spirit" of "Director" (a title Liddy compares to *"der Führer"*) J. Edgar Hoover's agency; and he remembers explaining to John Mitchell that the special intelligence unit would function as an *"Einsatzgruppe."*

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In Liddy's world of triumphant will all must be directed toward the creation of an *Übermensch,* a dominant, godlike figure who rises above the weakness and frailty of other men. For Liddy this urge took, in part, the form of self-mastery through the endurance of pain. To steel his will Liddy began in the early 1960's to burn the flesh of his left hand and forearm with cigarettes, matches and candles, a practice that on one occasion required surgery. Liddy's obsession with strength and superiority appears also in his attitude toward his wife and children. If he would be an *Übermensch,* then he must find a veritable Wagnerian heroine to bear strong and sturdy children. Having rejected his first love because she was too short and had delicate bones, Liddy persevered until he found a fit mate: "a highly intelligent, tall, fair, powerfully built Teuton, whose mind worked like the latest scientific wonder, the electronic computer."

Such thinking could not long rest easily beside the Roman Catholicism Liddy had imbibed in his youth. A clash was inevitable, and when it came Liddy calmly dispensed with God. With a triumphant will pumping the adrenalin of power and might through his veins, Liddy no longer feared or needed God. After ridding himself of the divine nemesis of the self-creating man, Liddy exulted in his decision to "live life armed only with my own inner resources. I felt a surge of confidence and resolve . . . I was free." Free from God, free from fear, beholden to no one in this world or beyond. Gordon Liddy thus realized in his own life the urge of modern Western man to displace God. With his eyes wide open Liddy entered that dark realm of pridefulness where men exceed divinely ordained boundaries, where will is all, and where the meek and weak perish. There is something almost satanic about this, some deep, brooding potential for evil that makes one's skin crawl.

It pains me to deal so harshly with Gordon Liddy, for he stood adamantly and courageously against the malignant forces that battered America in the 1960's. Edmund Burke once wrote that "they never will love where they ought to love, who do not hate where they ought to hate." Gordon Liddy knows where to hate, and that counts for much in this feckless and fatuously tolerant age of ours. But does Mr. Liddy—having sundered himself free from God and apotheosized the triumphant will—know where to love? □

Questions Unanswered and Left Hanging

Wright Morris: *Plains Song;* Harper & Row; New York.

by Juliana Geran Pilon

Amidst the cacophony of the glossy pulp novel and the gothic romance (a symptom indeed of the darkest ages), *Plains Song* stands in stark contrast, compelling, its simplicity deceptive. Aptly titled, this novel about life on a Midwestern farm—focusing especially on its steady, self-leashed women—has the markings of a prayer: the slow pace of carefully chosen language masking an original despair, and the solemnity of waiting for a Messiah who cannot come, at least not yet. Wright Morris has given us an American classic: devoid of pathos, *Plains Song* captures the peculiar drama that underlies so much of what looks to the uninitiated like prosaic, even slightly contemptible, workaholic puritanism.

The novel begins with the end, or the end in any case of its protagonist, Cora Atkins, who reminisces, half-consciously, unused as she is to introspection. In a sense it is the author who does the reminiscing for her: the ambiguity is deliberate, to create more vividly a sense of the woman's irrevocable alienation from her own self. Cora, who is indeed the "core" of the novel and of the farm that she helps run with her husband and, on occasion, his brother, provides the main theme for the "song" of the plains she has chosen (or, rather, *was* chosen) to inhabit and tame for food. That song is harmonious only insofar as there is not even an attempt at melodic texture, rhythmic variation or the slightest crescendo: the monophone of farming. Yet to portray Cora as a victim, and in particular, a victim of a patriarchal, "chauvinist" society, would quite miss the point of her own inability to know desire, her nearly religious addiction to work and discipline, her genuine tenacity and ability to adapt to her taciturn husband and the demands of a productive yet Sisyphean existence. Not that she fails to inspire compassion; a dedicated, even loving, mother (if love is possible to someone so captivated by duty), Cora is a faithful wife to a man who didn't know how to allow her the expectations that save a wedding night from being little more than rape by someone familiar. Her life happens, in daily sequence, until it is spent; yet behind the monotony, Morris paints, with the faintest brush strokes, an image of Cora's efficiently suppressed inkling of what might have been, but for God's will, a happiness she dared not think she might deserve.

More than a main character, Cora is indeed a symbol, a theme repeated in the other women in the novel. Defying the misogyny understandably typical of plains life, the genetic roulette spun off only female progeny in the Atkins family. Though each is different, the Atkins women share Cora's cross: the constant ritual of work against the tedious background of the Midwestern plains—colorless, endless, silent.

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There is little plot, and at times it seems that time itself has been lost: the story, set earlier in this century and brought up to the present, could have happened yesterday or tomorrow. Not unlike a believer's chant, the novel flows, carrying emotion without argument, closer to music than to philosophy. As Morris describes the women's chores, finished only to be started again, he captures the essence of a peculiar female type: with a few strokes he can portray both the sorrow and the pity of an existence centered on—indeed, defined by—unending toil. Of Cora's daughter he writes:

> She was slow, and she took her work easy, as she had to, but she liked it. She differed from Cora. Unfinished work weighed so on Cora's mind she might get up at night, or from a nap, to do it. Told to rest, she would reply, 'I can't rest while there's work to be done.' In that very fact Madge took pleasure. Leaving off at night, or resting during the day, she thought of the unfinished ironing and mending and fruit canning. That it remained to be done reassured her. That it was endless did not depress her. She got up pleased in the knowledge that there was work to be done. Ned had bought her a motor-driven washing machine that spared her the drudgery of tub-washing sheets and diapers, but she reserved his shirts and socks for the pleasure it gave her to use the washboard. She liked the sound of it. She liked the feel of it under her knuckles.

Each ensuing detail is as simple and as vital to baring this woman's soul. The picture is exact, intimate. One can almost feel her pleasure: genuine, and not in the least unlikely. These small events—trivial perhaps, yet the very stuff of her daily routine—become almost elegant. But whatever satisfaction such activity may provide (and satisfaction it must be, feminist protests to the contrary notwithstanding), it is not joy. Ecstasy of any kind is altogether absent—why, unimaginable—to the

characters of *Plains Song.*

This is true even of Sharon, Cora's niece, who leaves the farm for school in Chicago to pursue music. Not unattractive, Sharon somehow remains single (never "having been asked"), and hence (we are subtly led to conclude) unfulfilled—perhaps, indeed, even more so than the women she left on the farm. Fond of her family, she returns—not often, but she returns—observing it as a former inmate who understands and hence cannot condemn even as she rejects the almost brutal monotony of country existence. Perhaps she realizes that Chicago has not fundamentally changed her: transplanted as she is in the big city, Sharon long before came to share the qualities of her kinfolk. Like them, she never allows herself to realize pain; she too exists calmly, resigned to being alive.

When, at the end of the novel, Sharon returns for Cora's funeral, her distance from the relatives she left behind reveals itself as apparently immense, almost terrifying. But only at first; the next impression is that no lesser gulf separates each of them. The Atkinses' unwillingness (and, by now, inability) to articulate their feelings, their lack of any pretense, any attempt to "empathize," seem almost inhuman. Even so, Morris is scrupulously careful to paint these people with compassion and without condescension: at least they do not prattle. Whether they also do not think is not clear—yet neither is it relevant: they live, each for his own time, perhaps unconscious but surely not deluding themselves with either ideology or self-pity.

In contrast, the final scene of the book leaves the farm folk behind entirely, to center on a woman Sharon meets on her trip—a woman who is both articulate and "involved." Against the background of the Atkinses' seeming apathy (the resignation, the stoicism of the unreflective), Alexandra Selkirk's nervous, high-pitched lectures on the new morality are not without some appeal. Of her husband, whom she married young, she says that it had been "the custom of the tribe" that had made him her jailer. This:

> . . . had taught her that if you could change the customs you could change the world. Just recently the flower children had done it, with results she found nauseating. But it *had* been done. More change in ten years than in the previous five centuries. Was it a flaw in her argument to find that customs indeed might change, but not women? A cat was a cat, a dog was a dog, but who could say what it was to be a woman? Without an image of who they were, *who* were they?

The questions are left hanging. She asks them, nevertheless, and one can hardly fault her for it.

It is tempting to conclude that Morris implies, in this novel, that the questions cannot be answered, that women—and men, for that matter—cannot know who they are, that to look for "meaning" in life is futile, or rather that it simply emanates from daily existence, that any further conscious quest is sure to torment. The Atkins women, for example, did not bother to seek it—hence both their nobility and, undoubtedly, their ordeal. Such speculation, while unavoidable—Morris himself invites it—must ultimately miss the point of this eloquently understated novel. For, in truth, the book is really not intended to have any particular moral. Like all good literature, it portrays characters compassionately, faithfully, in their ordinary—which does not mean uninteresting—attempts to survive.

In the very last section a tense Alexandra confronts the tolerant, phlegmatic

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Sharon. The contrast is most vivid:

> Her arms lowered and dangling, her short hair tousled, Alexandra resembled an exotic, stork-legged bird. She said, 'Who said let there be light? *He* did. Who saw that all of it was good? *He* did. Who said let us make him in our own image? *He* did. Who said let them have dominion over the whole shebang? *He* did. We've been living under him all of these goddamn centuries. When I swear, My God! what am I doing, Sharon Rose, tell me that?' In spite of what she heard, of what was said, Sharon was comforted. When she heard the voice of Alexandra she heard *his* voice, and knew she was in good hands. That was her feeling, of course: the uppermost of the feelings she was able to bear.

We are not invited to choose between them, to like one rather than the other. On the one hand there is Alexandra, whose skepticism is at least evidence of the torment which is life; on the other, Sharon, whose implicit faith is a kind of sleep—the trait that allowed the Atkins women to bear their individual crosses. Neither, however, has answers: nor should she. For each plainsong is, in its own fashion, clear and beautiful; each has her own way of meeting her silent, difficult Lord. □

A Connoisseur's Recipe

Richard Nixon: *The Real War;* Warner Books; New York.

by Alan J. Levine

Many people may not be exactly overjoyed to see Richard Nixon reappear in public life. But such irritation should not obscure the truths the ex-president has attempted to publicize about the current state of the Cold War—that is, what he used to refer to as "détente." The appearance of this book after the Iranian crisis and Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan is most timely. Though overlong, overloaded with epigrammatic quotations and written in a sometimes incantationlike style, it supplies a readily comprehensible survey of the contemporary situation.

Nixon fundamentally returns to the perception that the West is engaged in a permanent Cold War with the Soviet Union, its puppets and its allies, only he recognizes that we are now in a far weaker position than ever before. He outlines current problems with a reasonable degree of clarity. He emphasizes the massive Soviet military build-up both in nuclear and conventional arms, Soviet moves in southern Africa and the Horn and their pincer moves in the Middle East proper, Yemen and Afghanistan. The Soviets' "antiresources" strategy and the peril to the West's "oil jugular" and the subtleties of Middle East politics have rarely been spelled out better.

Nixon skillfully tears down some of the devices many people have used to disguise what is going on from themselves and the public. While it is necessary to change things in South Africa, he observes that "We cannot let Africa become a stage on which Americans act out their psychic traumas" (as our ex-segregationist president and former Ambassador Young have been particularly apt to do). As Nixon bluntly points out, it is precisely Soviet conquest, whatever the guise in which it occurs, that will perpetuate "white domination" in Africa. He strongly urges a major military build-up, a revival of emphasis on relations with our allies and a recovery of the will to win. While he is entirely convincing on the need to alter course to avoid defeat, he is not quite clear on what would constitute "victory" for the West or on how to achieve it, although he devotes an entire chapter to this topic. Let us hope that Nixon's successors will read his discussion, based on hard-won experience, of how—and how *not*—to negotiate with the Soviets.

Though Nixon recognizes that "the nations most directly in the path of Soviet ambition are weak and unstable," he does not explain just what the West should do to prevent the Soviets from exploiting internal crises in these countries. Nixon seems to believe that the Iranian revolution could have been prevented if only the United States had backed the Shah more firmly. I wish I could agree. This is not, of course, a new problem; dealing with communist threats to unstable, usually authoritarian regimes in the world's backward regions has been the great unsolved puzzle of the Cold War—starting with China. Nixon rightly stresses the moral distinction between the "authoritarian" regimes with which we are sometimes allied and our "totalitarian" enemies. But he does not resolve some of the practical problems created by alliances with authoritarian regimes. (To be fair, no one else has been very successful at doing this either.) Nixon urges that "the leaders of Saudi Arabia, Oman, Kuwait and other key states must be unequivocally reassured that should they be threatened by revolutionary forces, either internally or externally, the United States will stand strongly with them so that they will not suffer the same fate as the Shah." When one considers the limited bases of support for these usually absolute monarchies, their large foreign populations—often Palestinian—and the danger of a complete desertion of such regimes even by elite groups (as happened in Iran), one wonders whether there would be much of a lever by which the West *could* intervene in a revolutionary crisis. In other words, it is possible that these regimes are simply not viable. But Nixon does not discuss this possibility or suggest how these countries could

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be placed on a truly stable basis. Since the West cannot let its vital oil supplies fall into the hands of the Soviets, or Khomeini, or Qaddafi-style fanatics, it is not impossible that outright military occupation—even a form of colonial rule—may someday be required. This prospect, however distasteful, should have been examined.

Though sensible enough in describing our present crisis, Nixon is not very good at explaining how it arose, and he is confusing—often disingenuous—when he explains the disastrous role of his own administration in creating this mess. He is frank enough to admit that agreements with the Soviets were oversold, to put it mildly. He now regrets the termination of the draft and his trade policies toward the Soviet Union. But he still dangerously fogs the issue by continuing to maintain that he achieved something called "détente." The truth of the matter is that the agreements that allegedly created Nixon's "détente," *viewed in the most favorable light,* were far less important than the agreements of the first post-Stalin "thaw" of the 1950's—and we know how feeble, short-lived and deceptive those agreements were. Though Nixon *now* emphasizes that détente involved only a limited understanding primarily aimed at avoiding nuclear war, and that he did not view it as a replacement for the containment policy or the end of the Cold War, he certainly failed to make this clear at the time. His current view of the strategic balance is a bit hard to reconcile with his Secretary of State's famous complaint that strategic superiority was meaningless. The role of his administration in allowing the Soviets to overtake us becomes more than a little blurred. Nixon stresses that "SALT I itself did not freeze us into an inferior position." It is certainly true that SALT I did not have this result all by itself. But a few pages later, Nixon himself barely and vaguely alludes to the superior "throw weight" given the Soviets by SALT, and he admits that the Soviets "exploited loopholes in the SALT I agreement contrary to our understanding." Some would not hesitate to call it a sleight-of-hand ratiocination.

Nixon's examination of the disasters in Southeast Asia is, to be blunt, deceitful. While the policies of his predecessors in Vietnam were nothing to brag about, his claim that the war in South Vietnam was being won in the early 60's, before Diem was overthrown, is simply not true. It is even less true that President Johnson needlessly "Americanized" the war in 1965, as Nixon implies. There was no choice other than to abandon South Vietnam or to send in American ground-combat troops. This should not, however, disguise the justice of Nixon's defense of the 1970 "invasion" of Cambodia against the rabid accusations of his critics. Indeed, the only criticism of that operation which makes any sense after ten years is that it was *not* an invasion; it was too limited. How many massacred people would still be alive today if the United States Army had entirely occupied Cambodia? But Nixon is again disingenuous in claiming that in 1973 "we had won the war militarily and politically in Vietnam" and "then we threw it away" by failing to supply South Vietnam, by stopping the bombing in Cambodia, and by denying the president the power to enforce the peace agreements. This is partisan, self-serving bluster. Although these things unquestionably helped to pave the way for the communists' final victory in 1975, the North Vietnamese invasion was possible only because the war had by no means been won. At the time of the "peace agreement," the North Vietnamese retained intact "sanctuaries" in Laos and Cambodia which completely outflanked the South Vietnamese, and they maintained an army of at least 150,000 men inside the prewar borders of South Vietnam. Though the Vietcong in the south were defeated, and a stable, if not popular, regime existed in Saigon, it can hardly be said that our war aim of a secure, independent South Vietnam was ever achieved.

> ". . . a compendium of horror stories about insatiable commissars poised to gobble up the world . . ."
>
> —*New York Review of Books*
>
> ". . . he has no shame . . . . I am astonished at his insolence."
>
> —Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.
> *Saturday Review*

More or less justifiable bitterness at Nixon's abuses and mistakes, and his occasional attempts to polish his own record, should not be allowed to obscure the truths put forward in *The Real War.* The book must be rated as a not-unsuccessful attempt by Mr. Nixon to rehabilitate himself in the public eye by trying to render the nation a real service. Its ascension to the best-seller list may indicate that his effort was fruitful. Perhaps Mr. Nixon's book may cure some people of the confusion that his policies helped to create. □

COMMON SENSE AND SUFFICIENT ENERGY

by James J. O'Connor
Chairman, Commonwealth Edison

in the October 1980 issue
of *Persuasion At Work*

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Two Married Pronouns

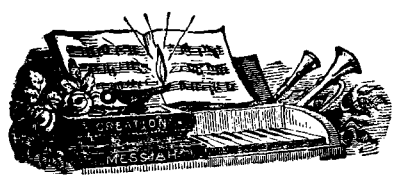
Herbert Gold: *He/She;* Arbor House; New York.

by Christina Murphy

He is the devoted, if somewhat infantile and dependent, husband who does not want to see his marriage end. She is the post-women's lib wife, insecure in the security she has known, seeking fulfillment in a nebulously defined freedom, sure of only one thing: marriage and motherhood have trapped her and drained her of her essence. He, rather than accept the most rudimentary principle of emotional fulfillment—which is: if you can't have what you want, learn to want something else—prefers, instead, to plead, beg, bargain and argue his wife into explaining to him what has happened to their marriage and why She no longer loves him. She, aware that in any relationship the one who loves the least can manipulate the most, uses his need to her advantage, coyly playing games with his ego, seducing him, rejecting him, comforting him, despising him, throwing barbs of spite and blame which he willingly accepts and seldom returns. In all, She is the consummate game player, a deft craftsman of control who knows her adversary well, especially his needs and weaknesses.

The main characters of this novel remain nameless throughout. By the same token, they remain largely unknown. An abstract He and an abstract She, fighting out the power game inherent in any relationship predicated upon the vulnerability of meeting emotional needs. It is the enigma of marriage itself that Gold goes after, an understanding of the psychological nexus which binds two lives together as one. Had Gold been successful in his pursuit, *He/She* would have been a most insightful and revealing novel. As it is, it is a novel which skirts and circles central issues, contents itself with repetition and predictability, and never rises much above monodimensional characters seeking and espousing nonsolutions to their problems.

It is tempting to say that this novel fails because of the slimness of its subject matter—marriage in the modern age is, after all, perceived by many as a vacuous experience. But Bergman, Albee and many others have managed to make convincing portraits of contemporary life from the emotional wasteland of love/hate marital relationships. It is tempting, too, to blame the failure of *He/She* solely upon the weakness of its characterizations. The characters in this novel do not grow, change or develop. They are what they are from beginning to end, and what they are, unfortunately, is often not even sufficient to hold the reader's attention, let alone merit his concern. Throughout, He remains fawning and childlike, seeking to return, at any cost, to the security of wife/mother and the nurturing comfort of home. She, throughout, remains ambivalent and catty, the type of woman men delight in labeling as castrating. As He grows weaker, more dependent and needy, She grows stronger, more aloof and independent. He demands explanations; She dispenses smoke screens and empty platitudes. He wants her to stay and never leave him; She, however, is willing to throw him away, but not to let him go. These struggles and conflicts within the characters themselves eventually culminate in a series of endless and repetitive dialogues in which explanations are sought but never proffered, and in which each character seeks to be known but is never fully understood.



If the dialogues themselves (which are all variations on a theme and streaked with the monotony of people who talk a great deal but say nothing) weren't enough to kill this novel, the absurdity and banality of the cast of minor characters would be. Foremost in ridiculousness amongst the minor characters is the daughter He and She share in common, Cynthia. Cynthia makes very few direct appearances in the novel, but when she does, she is capable of reducing the novel's believability level to zero. Only Cynthia can ride with her father across town and at one intersection call him "Poopoopants Daddy" and at another dispense philosophical insights into her father's dilemma, which contains the core of the novel's themes and the sum total of its conclusions. Cynthia is followed in order of absurd descent by Paul and Paula, two nonprofessional, self-appointed marriage counselors who, for thirty dollars an hour, speak in Gestaltese and manage to obscure even the most simple rudiments of common sense. He is disgusted with both Paul and Paula, but apparently learns no lesson, for soon He is enmeshed in the arms of Jehane, an aging Age of Aquarius groupie who speaks of transcendence, chakras, karma and the New Age coming, while artfully seducing him in saunas and hot tubs. While He retreats into the gibberish of misdirected Zen, She fares no better in seeking solace and suitors, managing to snare for herself Hal, the predictable beefcake lover with an animal's intelligence and an animal's appetite for sex. He, of course, is chastised for being jealous of Hal and is instructed that the times they are a'changing for the expression of women's sexual needs. When She learns that He has become involved with Jehane, She, of course,

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and to no one's surprise, becomes intensely jealous and possessive of him, endorsing once again the do-as-I-say-not-as-I-do philosophy She lives by throughout the novel. Add a long, totally irrelevant scene in which He spends months watching a young woman at breakfast at the Morning Kettle, only to be rebuffed when He introduces himself and endeavors to make his "move," and the blandness of the novel reaches its high point.

Underlying the plot of a good novel is a substratum of meaning and philosophical insight. The thicker and deeper the substratum, the more significant and lasting the novel. The substratum of *He/She*, however, is paper thin, for this is a novel without much substance, one which meanders and gropes its way through many mazes and yet somehow manages not to illuminate a single dark corner. A few more ironic twists and this novel could well be viewed as a parody of itself in which all of these characters would become absurdist cartoons of the emptiness of modern life, the futility of deep and meaningful emotional relationships, the better joys of hedonism over personal growth and fulfillment. But *He/She* is not a failed attempt at satire and parody; it is obviously a novel which asks to be taken seriously. And that is unfortunate, for it is in the asking to be taken seriously that the novel fails most completely, largely because *He/She* is a gutted novel. Missing are the innards and the complexities which would make this a good novel, and present are only superficialities and caricatures of real-life struggles and defeats. In the first half of *He/She,* He seeks explanations for what has happened to him and to his dream of true love. Halfway through the novel, He abandons this search for reasons and goes, instead, with the flow of events deterministically outside his control. *He/She* reads as if Gold, too, began this novel as a journey of explanation, but halfway through abandoned the quest and settled for generalities.

Perhaps the most intriguing questions suggested by *He/She* are precisely those which it fails to explore: why do people fall out of love, why is sexuality such a deep and yet often malevolent bond, why do people use each other, why do people cling, why are people so often self-deceived, and why do people hang on to destructive, incomplete relationships when they could choose better ones? In the absence of any attempt even to search out the implications of these questions and issues, *He/She* remains a largely skeletal novel. Whatever emotional impact it might have had upon the reader is sacrificed to the easier requirements of stasis. The journey of *He/She* is circuitous and leads nowhere. The characters have talked themselves out early in the novel, yet they keep on talking. They have deeply hurt each other, yet they keep on wounding. Perhaps most important, they know the relationship has peaked and died, yet they keep on clinging. To have been given one glimpse of these characters by Gold is to have seen them for all they are. Many glimpses put together do not add substance or depth, only tedium. He and She quickly whittle themselves down to indifference, but the reader has beaten them there by a mile. □

Updating the Doctrine of the Two Spheres

Carl N. Degler: *At Odds;* Oxford University Press; New York.

***Marriage and Family in a Changing Society;* Edited by James M. Henslin; The Free Press; New York.**

by Gordon M. Pradl

Schizophrenia appears to be the characteristic mental disturbance of our age. This splitting of the personality into two distinct selves parallels our society's increasing failure to provide the conditions necessary for the development of an individual's inner experience. With privacy, patience and commitment ever more suspect virtues in our disposable technocratic culture, our better feelings are denied, and we are systematically foiled in our efforts to establish relationships of true intimacy. To understand this poisonous, hate-filled milieu which nullifies the norms of our humanity is to begin to appreciate the malaise currently afflicting our fundamental social arrangement: the family.

Traditionally in America the woman has stood at the center of the family nexus, while it in turn has served to define her responsibility and mission in life. Such an intertwined relationship suggests prima facie a compelling explanation for the deteriorating position of the modern family and the subsequent erosion of its moral authority: the dramatic shift in women's allegiances, especially with the last generation. No longer content to focus her identity exclusively around hearth and home, serving the needs and desires of her wage-earning husband and their children, woman has begun to move outward from the family looking for new connections, new meanings for existence away from the world dominated by the male. This so-called "liberation" has supposedly sent shock waves through existing family patterns. Such an appealing analysis, however, not only ignores the real assault on our normal human relationships, but further deludes people into thinking that our domestic problems would all be

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solved if only we could get women back into the fold where they belong.

That these issues must be considered in their true complexity, marked by contradiction and paradox, is rightfully urged upon us by Carl Degler in *At Odds,* his well-researched and nonpolemical history of women and the family in America from the revolution to the present. Faced with the task of presenting an account of ideas, attitudes and sensibilities, rather than a chronology of clearly delineated events, Professor Degler has organized his material around the key questions that have surrounded the evolving relationship between women and the family: What prerogatives does the wife and mother have with respect to her male partner? Who will define and control sexuality, fertility, abortion? How will opportunities, first in higher education and then in the job market, change the social arrangements of women and the family? And finally, how will suffrage and subsequent equality under the law alter woman's allegiance to her husband and children?

In each instance, as Degler notes, women have expanded their possibilities in order to control their unique destinies and not simply accept the role definitions forced on them by others:

> . . . the history of the family is best understood by recognizing that changes in the role of women—particularly in what has been called the extension of individualism to women—the awakening to self—have been at the root of that history. As women have changed in their relations to men and children, the family has been altered. For in the end that *is* the family: a congeries of relationships among parents and their children. But instead of considering these alterations merely as responses to exogenous or outside forces, they also need to be acknowledged as flowing from changes in women's self-perception.

Yet, just as self-determination is never willingly granted by those with power, so it is also never unqualifiedly welcomed by those without, as *At Odds* clearly goes on to demonstrate.

While the women's voices that Degler allows to echo eloquently through his pages speak naturally enough on both sides of every round in the great debate over the extension of women's rights, what is truly impressive is the intelligence, sensitivity and vitality their words express. Indeed, as the force of their words accumulates, the reader comes to realize that the current controversies need to be viewed from the gathered perspectives of over 200 years. In 1867, Caroline Dall, for instance, made the case that a woman was first her own person, and only second the wearer of roles traditionally prescribed by the family unit—"We have not laid a secure foundation for any statement on the subject unless we have made it clear that 'woman's rights' are identical with 'human rights'; that no father, brother, or husband can have all the privileges ordained for him of God, till mother and sister and wife are set free to secure them according to instinctive individual bias."

The central fear raised by such assertions as Ms. Dall's has always been fueled by the belief that human rights were incompatible with a woman's domestic role. In these terms the whole history of woman's self-perception has unfolded as she has attempted to widen her sphere of influence without denying the legitimate demands placed upon her by the family. In each instance, whether women were gaining access to higher education or the polling booths, prophets of doom predicted that women would flee from their family obligations in hordes. Yet although such pessimism has proved groundless, as Degler's evidence shows, change in the family is still seen as a serious threat:

> . . . with each advancement . . . there were those of both sexes who warned that the integrity of the family, or society, or perhaps civilization itself was put at risk by the idea that women were individuals, with interests that might be different from men's or the family's. And although in every case in the past these prophecies of disaster have proved false, neither the prophecies nor the fears that generated them have died out. For the family and woman's relationship to it are still undergoing change. No social changes seem so threatening as those that take place within the family because the family has been for so long the ultimate sanctuary of men and women.

In reaching out to establish their individuality, women have encountered that insurmountable roadblock already experienced by too many men: the unavailability of meaningful jobs. Our identity, our character, is very much a function of a reciprocal set of exchanges. The first involves a turning inward which is nurtured by the intimate loving and long-term commitment made possible by the family—between spouses, between parents and children and beyond in a myriad of possible networks. The second includes having some stake in getting the world's work done through practicing the skills of some vocation or profession. These two areas of human experience serve a complementary relationship, balancing off our

In the Mail

The Oracle in the Heart **by Kathleen Raine; The Dolmen Press, George Allen and Unwin Ltd.; Mountrath, Portlaoise, Ireland.** A collection of poems from 1974 to 1978, largely inspired by the elements of nature.

Unions and the Public Interest: Collective Bargaining in the Government Sector **by Sandra Christensen; The Fraser Institute; Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.** An examination of the growth of public-sector unions, how they compare to the private sector, and several practical suggestions for how to cope with the problems posed by public sector labor disputes.

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natural demands for both private and public, cooperative and competitive, group and individual expression. Or as Degler makes the point:

> The family . . . like the great traditional movements, is an anti-individualistic institution. In fact, its denial of individualism is the source of the family's strong attraction for many men and women today. For at least two centuries the best known alternative to the individualism, competitiveness, and egoism that infuse the modern, industrial and urban world has been the family . . . . In the face of an individualistic market economy, the family has seemed the epitome of true humanity and interrelatedness. . . . In short, aside from the evidence that Americans still consider the family a central institution in their lives, the very values for which it has stood over the years suggest that it will endure.

Yet the history of the sexes, rigidly defined by the doctrine of the two spheres with its idealized cult of true womanhood, has been one where these two means of expression have been segregated. As a result, men have been cut off from an equal sharing in the moral obligations of the family, and women have been cut off from an equal sharing in the power opportunities of the world.

This has not meant that women have not labored long and hard outside the home. For instance, of the 100,000 factory workers producing cotton cloth in 1822, 65,000 were women. But as Degler notes, most of the work for women outside the home was viewed in terms of moral uplift and social service in which the world was only a large extension of the home. Thus teaching and social work, or various support functions such as those provided by secretaries or nurses, remained the exclusive purview of women. Degler's comment sums up this distinct division of labor: "Women shaped their work around the family and men shaped family life around work." In this regard today's

statistics showing vast numbers of women as members of the work force should not be misinterpreted. They do not mean that women are now "completing" themselves outside the confines of the family because, actually, most of this going to work results from the economic imperative of "making ends meet" rather than from being able to participate in the real opportunities afforded the individual by the job market—in essence, despite surface appearances, a woman's first role of wife and mother still predominates.

The issue then is clearly drawn, as the words of the *Smith College Weekly* that appeared in 1919 assert: "We cannot believe that it is fixed in the nature of things that a woman must choose between a home and her work, when a man may have both. There must be a way out and it is the problem of our generation to find the way." What we need to recognize is that this assignment of women to predetermined roles represents a tremendous waste of talent and energy and flies in the face of established liberal principles. True liberalism argues for a free economy (with its associated successes and failures) because, borrowing from the philosophy of empiricism, we know that we cannot determine in advance which ideas and products will prevail and which will not. And yet, fearful that an overwhelming number of women would reject childbearing and attendant family responsibilities, we have consigned more than half of our population in advance to a domestic role, not allowing their natural abilities to take them wherever the course of events might lead. In other words, for today's family to succeed both sexes must have equal access to the rights and privileges of each sphere. For just as the separate-but-equal doctrine did not work in the area of race relations, neither will it solve the problems facing the contemporary family.

In this light the family's real enemy is not woman's emerging individualism; rather, the real enemy is the rise of commercial exploitation of this individualism and the values of lib culture. The family's traditional values of privacy and commitment, for instance, are daily assaulted by the all-pervasive video box. To sell us goods that we do not need, its programming and advertising disconfirm our true sensibilities with the antivalues of fragmentation and instant and self-gratification. Nor is it mere coincidence that just as the integrity and initiative of the individual are systematically being swept away by the burgeoning bureaucracy of the state, so are the prerogatives of the family withering away. As an example, the fact that not all parents do the right thing by their children does not mean that state agencies, especially the school, have to march in with all the answers. Yet, increasingly, parents are caving in to the usurpation of their responsibilities—"Someone else will do it." (Furthermore, in such circumstances all too many of the decent actions and intentions of parents go for naught.) Such a flight from responsibility, of course, ends up diminishing our freedom (which in economic terms, ironically, must be translated into our freedom *not* to buy). Thus today, as our desires are being inflamed and our baser instincts tempted, the countervailing force of the family becomes even more crucial if we are to survive as a people.

Anyone wishing to explore further these issues affecting the family will be well served by Professor Henslin's edited collection of 42 articles, *Marriage and Family in a Changing Society.* Divided into four main sections ("Premarital Reality: Socialization and Behavior," "Learning Marital Reality: Adjustment, Conflict, and Transition," "Marital Maladjustment, Terminations, and Ther-

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apy," and "The Future of Marriage and the Family"), each with its own crisp introduction, this college reader attempts to provide a spectrum of views on everything affecting the family—from the ambivalence of woman's passive role (the constraints placed on all of us by conventional stereotypes of normal masculinity and femininity) to the tragedy of divorce (we can change partners like we change laundry detergents) and single-parent families (up from 11% in 1970 to 19% in 1979). But, after all the analysis, the statistics and the rhetoric have been exhausted, we are still left with the cold fact that those who would attack our basic freedoms are those who benefit most by the breakup of the family's authority. The values and prerogatives of the family run counter to lib culture, and since opposition is not to be tolerated, the virtues of the family must be ridiculed out of existence.

Taking a firm stand against the tyranny of those pushing us toward "exposure" (especially in the area of the pseudosexual revolution) will not be easy. Yet were both spouses to begin to share more equally in morality and power, were the doctrine of the two spheres not abolished but creatively integrated into a unity of opposites, were dialogue, not schizoid detachment, to reign supreme once again, we might witness a new vitality flowing from the potential sources and resources of the family. □

Paltry Secrets

Wilbur Crane Eveland: *Ropes of Sand: America's Failure in the Middle East;* W. W. Norton & Co.; New York.

by Michael W. Albin

On July 25, 1958, Wilbur Crane Eveland left Lebanon after his attempts to prop the government of Camille Chamoun had failed. He tells us that this was the last assignment of importance he ever had from the CIA. By 1961 he had quit the government to make his well-paid way in the oil and construction business. *Ropes of Sand* is a memoir of his years as a Middle East expert for the Department of Defense and the CIA. It is enlivened by gossip about such personalities as Kim Philby and laced with acerbic digressions on his favorite villains: his employers in the public and private sectors, the Dulles brothers, U.S. foreign policy over the past thirty years and Israel. Because his substantial income depended on American government and private business in the Middle East, it is not altogether clear why he is now biting the hands that fed him and presumably now pay him sizable pensions. Since, by his own admission, he loyally carried out the CIA's orders to plot the overthrow of governments and buy elections, and later, in business, became handy at winning contracts for his firms with bribes and influence, one can surmise that this book is an act of contrition.

An act of contrition it may be—an act of humility it is not. Here I do not criticize the construction of his tale. After all, it is Eveland's life and he can tell it any way he wishes. I refer to the long, sententious interlineations based not on history but on hindsight. He delivers his judgments as if he were John Foster Dulles, himself, instead of merely a minor figure in what Miles Copeland calls the Game of Nations, one who managed once or twice to win admittance to the presence of the Secretary of State. This would not be so bad if we were sure that Eveland is leveling with us, telling us the story as he saw and understood it. But, in fact, he leaves out a great deal of material, important and not so important. An instance: he does not acknowledge that the 1958 landing in Beirut by the Army and Marines was one of the only successes the U.S. has ever enjoyed in the Middle East. Another instance: he refuses to mention that there were other American negotiators besides himself, Robert Murphy and Ambassador Robert McClintock who had their spoons in the Lebanese stew in the summer of 1958. As an exposé, *Ropes of Sand* is a big disappointment.

As history it is even worse, although I suppose it is in the nature of political memoirs to be episodic. In this one, the only continuity between the stages of the author's career is his musings on life in the service of a benighted foreign strategy. He uses "his thoughts" to relate American strategy to his role in its execution: "The sight of an E1 A1 Constellation as I took off from Orly turned my thoughts to how our quest for an Arab-Israeli peace agreement had been subordinated to coping with diversionary crises." And, "A rough landing at Istanbul jogged my thoughts back to the mission . . ." His CIA experiences yielded excellent contacts that he could later use in business, but they are about as useful to the serious reader as a news dispatch from a hack stringer.

Eveland, like so many of us Americans associated with the Arabs, takes the Arab cause seriously and sees Israel as a source of disruption in the region. He is of that overrated-yet-feared breed, the foreign-service Arabist. His career as an expert, operative and coupmaster began with a few months' training at the military-language school in Monterey, California in 1949. It is not clear whether he ever spoke a word of Arabic beyond *marhaba* (hello) for the rest of his life. After a posting to Baghdad as military attaché, he began his rapid advancement in the Pentagon bureaucracy. The generals treated his advice with respect because he kept a map of the Middle East under the glass on his

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desk and he could pronounce Arabic names. He had highly visible assignments in the office of the Secretary of Defense, with the Joint Chiefs of Staff and with the National Security Council. The NSC lent him to the CIA and eventually provided his "cover" during his sojourn in the Middle East in the 1950's. Along the way he caught the eye of Allen Dulles, whose special representative in the Levant he became. This status allowed him to elbow aside career CIA men in Washington and in the field. Their resentment is a major refrain in the book. With Damascus and then Beirut as headquarters, he kept tabs on the ramifications of the Baghdad Pact for the CIA director. There were also visits to various trouble spots, such as Saudi Arabia after Nasser had taken control of the Suez Canal, and other exciting adventures.

Eveland, an outsider in the CIA, was a freethinker. If not for concern for his career, he might have become an open cynic. He tells us that he was on the losing side of every Middle Eastern policy debate inside the administration during the 50's. He warned against military aid to the Shah in 1953; he did what he could to discredit the idea of the Baghdad Pact, but when it became a reality he was chagrined that the U.S. held aloof from it; he opposed the CIA's partnership with Israel's Mossad intelligence apparatus; and he criticized the CIA's "covert political-action operations" in Arab countries. But in many cases his opposition was only cosmetic. He never let principle interfere with his livelihood. One day, toward the end of his four-year detail with the CIA, he was in Allen Dulles's office for a personal conversation about his future with the agency. In a reflective mood, the director outlined to him why the CIA must rely on Mossad in the struggle with the Russians. To Eveland, Dulles's conclusions were wrongheaded. He says, "In my view, relying on Israel's reports about Soviet activities in the Arab states . . . was remarkably like depending on a fox to guard the henhouse. As for the CIA's role in facilitating Israel's development of advanced weapons, this certainly contravened the intent of the Mutual Security Act by sacrificing America's ability to control Israel's use of any weapons acquired or developed with U.S. assistance." He did not mention these misgivings to Dulles, though, even in relaxed conversation; he saved his best arguments for his memoirs.

If there is anything in the book to repay the reader's attention, it is the reminder of the failures and amateurishness of the Dulles years, a time that many now look back to as a golden age of American power. To perceptive observers, like James Burnham, it was no such thing. They knew that Foster Dulles was only sparring with the Russians, and the Russian invasion of Hungary provides the best example of American timidity. Eveland supplies more melancholy evidence of this. During the hectic days of the Suez fray, the crew of a Hungarian ship mutinied and took the vessel to the nearest port, Beirut. The Lebanese authorities brought the case to the American Embassy with the expectation that the U.S. would ask their government to grant the crewmen asylum. Eveland cabled Allen Dulles the details. Dulles replied that the sailors had better return to their ship and made no request to the Lebanese to aid them. Eveland must have felt remorse and disgust as he "watched the tiny ship disappear over the horizon with its cargo of Hungarian patriots, now consigned to death or to a lifetime in prison."

There was quite a stir when this book appeared. According to the *Washington Post,* the CIA "effectively delayed" its publication by demanding prepublication review. It is certain that the CIA did not hand this tidbit to the *Post.* Because Eveland gives us to believe that it was he who invented the technique of judiciously leaking information to the press—using such reporters as Sam Brewer and Kennett Love to influence official opinion in Washington—it would not be farfetched to conclude that the source of the *Post's* report was Eveland himself. Recently I discussed *Ropes of Sand* with an "old Middle East hand" who had not yet read it. "Why did he write the book?" she asked, scandalized. "He shouldn't be telling those things." My friend need have no worries. Eveland's paltry secrets will not do the country any harm.

The only really new light he sheds on American doings in the Arab countries relates to the coup he tried to engineer in Syria, a *démarche* ordered from Washington in 1956. The folly of this operation is beyond imagining. First, Eveland apparently knew next to nothing of the maelstrom of Syrian politics when he plunged in with a half-million Syrian pounds in bribes. Second, not a single person at the embassy in Damascus—not the ambassador, not the CIA station chief—knew an American-inspired coup was in the offing. Third, the planning took place at the very time the region was ready to ignite over Suez. Finally, zero hour was set for the precise day that Israel invaded Egypt, leaving the CIA, so to speak, unbriefed. Evidently, Eveland had only one contact on the Syrian political scene, a conservative politician named Mikha'il Ilyan. Ilyan was to distribute the half-million pounds to the generals, colonels and bureaucrats who needed buying. What Eveland does not mention is that Mikha'il Ilyan was one of the richest men in Syria, with holdings of land along the Mediterranean littoral worth hundreds of millions of dollars. For years he had been financing from his own purse politicians whose views were harmonious with his own. It is understandable that he was interested in U.S. support for his coup against a shaky government ready to surrender sovereignty to Egypt, but it is hard to believe that he wanted American money any more than he wanted American advice on how to conduct the operation.

In the end the coup fizzled, and visions of betrayal by 1) the Israelis, 2)

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the British and French, and/or 3) John Foster Dulles raced through Eveland's head. He concluded that the U.S. had no business interfering in Syrian politics. What he did not realize was that the situation in Syria, from the standpoint of the moderates, had become insufferable. Historian Nabil M. Kaylani writes of this period that the country, "traditional at heart, was being radicalized by a determined leftist minority." Under those circumstances the U.S. would have been remiss not to have offered help to a friendly majority trying to resist subversion, but a poorly organized coup was worse than no action at all.

We can thank Eveland for helping to explain America's failure in the Middle East: it came from sending boys to do men's work. □

Of Marxian Bondage

Sidney Lens: *Unrepentant Radical: An American Activist's Account of Five Turbulent Decades;* Beacon Press; Boston.

by Clarence B. Carson

No latter-day Lincoln has ever come forth to proclaim the emancipation of intellectuals. Probably none has perceived the necessity. Certainly, few intellectuals are aware of the need; they tend to view themselves as that portion of the population most completely emancipated. When were they emancipated? If Western intellectuals were to reflect upon this question, they would probably arrive at the answer that it occurred gradually during the course of the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. It came in the wake of the Protestant revolt and the decline of religious authority. Prior to that time, being an intellectual was largely a church vocation. Most intellectuals were priests and monks; they comprised that portion of the population most apt to be able to read and write and have the leisure for contemplation. More broadly, the clergy were usually the best educated, did the teaching and possessed skills in verbal communications. The clergy as intellectuals, however, were generally subject to the discipline of churches and congregations. Thus, what intellectuals, on reflection, would be likely to think is that their emancipation came as the power of the churches was broken, as many functions formerly provided by the clergy were secularized, and as freedom of speech and of the press was established.

There is, however, more than one kind of bondage. There is bondage of the spirit, bondage of the mind and bondage of the body. Within the past century, many intellectuals have come under ideological bondage. (Many of them have even come to believe that any coherent system of thought is an ideology.) The most common ideological bondage is to Marxism. It is a bondage of the mind and spirit which, when Marxists come to power, is translated into physical bondage for those within its realm.

Sidney Lens has spent his adult life in bondage to Marxism. Much of the time he was a Trotskyite, which meant that during the Stalin years he favored world revolution rather than revolution in one country. Lens has been, successively, a labor organizer, a minor labor leader, a "peacenik" and a journalist. He was hardly trained as an intellectual, never even went to college, but he made up for it over the years by mastering the art of propaganda and by becoming a prolific writer of articles and books. Eventually, writing became his main activity.

There is no evidence in this autobiography that Lens is aware of his bondage to ideology. He has not, as the title points out, repented for his five decades of radicalism. The only significant change in his thinking is that he no longer generally favors violent revolution, though we are never apprised of the extent to which he ever did. He is now more of an evolutionary than a revolutionary socialist. He sums up his position this way:

> A revolution in stages is desirable, if it is possible, because there is a minimum of bloodshed and political power remains dispersed. In a violent revolution there is a tendency for such power to be centralized in a single person or a small group; that is the kind of situation that lends itself to authoritarianism, whether in a capitalist or a socialist society. It becomes very difficult for a leader under these circumstances to disgorge himself of the total power in his hands; only a few socialist leaders have had moderate success in that regard. It is much better for revolution to proceed in stages, and I think that it is possible in the United States and Western Europe today.

If he were vouchsafed five more decades of experience with radicalism, Mr. Lens might discover that the concentration of power is not simply a consequence of revolution, but rather a complex consequence of socialist ideology. But I wouldn't bet on it. A man who took five decades to get from Karl Marx to Eduard Bernstein would probably require a millennium to discover the fallacies in socialism.

It could be argued that Mr. Lens has not been in mental and spiritual bondage, that since he is an American, he is free to choose socialism or not. Having freely chosen socialism, it might be further argued, he is not therefore in bondage to it. It does not follow, however, that because one has chosen his course that he is thereafter free. Some who have been in prison are said to pre-

Dr. Carson's latest book is The World in the Grip of an Idea.

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fer it to the outside world. Charles Manson is supposed to have requested not to be released when he was last in prison before his involvement in the Tate-La-Bianca murders. He would have been no less a prisoner had the authorities yielded to his request, though he was in prison by choice.

Elizabeth Bentley called her account of her years in the Communist Party (and as a secret agent) and of her departure *Out of Bondage.* It is easy enough to understand why, once she had broken the connection, she should think of her former condition as one of bondage. As a Party member, she was bound by the positions taken by the Kremlin. As a secret agent, she was bound to carry out the orders of those higher in the chain of command. She was, as she eventually discovered, a bondservant of the leaders of the Soviet Union.

Sidney Lens's bondage over the years was much less palpable but, in important ways, no less real. He belonged to no party with a foreign power base. He did not serve as a secret agent, engage in espionage or sabotage. Even his positions on issues were not ordinarily dictated to him by someone in high command. Technically, he was free.

Yet Sidney Lens could hardly have been more devoted to the success of communism in Russia, China, Cuba and other places had he been a card-carrying communist. That is not to say that he did not disagree with the communist rulers from time to time. He did not, for example, approve the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956. Nor, for that matter, was he an outspoken defender of slave-labor camps. Rather he felt, as socialists of all varieties do, that communism must not *fail* once it comes to power.

It is not simply a matter of his holding certain views; it is rather that the views were not his as an *individual.* They were views of the collective, so to speak, views held and expressed by all who were of the ideology. His views were not only void of originality—after all, most men are not strikingly original—but also of personality. Once one has become acquainted with Sidney Lens's mode of arriving at conclusions, his opinions become predictable in advance. Not because of the consistency of his thought, nor because of his integrity, but because his opinions are simply such as follow from bondage to socialist ideology. Here, for example, is Lens's description of the Cold War:

> The grand design [of the United States] as it evolved, was to grant military help to the imperial powers—to save them per se and in some instances to save their empires—then to give help to the new nations that had broken away from the old empires . . . .
>
> For all this the Pentagon needed a network of bases around the world, and a force ready to jump into any fray anywhere at a few hours' notice. Even more, it needed to immobilize the Soviet Union, the one nation capable of giving substantial aid to peoples seeking to secede from Pax Americana. A military machine was fashioned, complete with nuclear weapons and launchers, to threaten the Soviets with disaster if they became too frisky.

Pravda couldn't have said it better. And here is his judicious appraisal of McCarthyism:

> There were actually millions, tens of millions of people who believed such nonsense, so much so that before long some 'patriotic' workers were harassing suspected 'reds'; Hollywood writers were being fired by the movie moguls for tainted associations; politicians and generals were cowering before the McCarthy assault . . . Unlike Nazi Germany, no one was killed or put into concentration camps, but the mentality for doing such things was in the germination stage, as evidenced by the law passed under the sponsorship of Senator Pat McCarran early in the Korean War, which among other things set up detention camps to imprison 'subversives' during an emergency.

If Sidney Lens did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him. There have been many approximations, of course, of the socialist ideal, but none, to my knowledge, fulfills it so completely as does Lens. None, over the years, has always held the "right" opinions, joined the "right" causes and been on the side of the "angels" in all disputes. Almost everyone wavers and strays from the path on occasion. Not Sidney Lens, however, for he has been the "complete socialist" for five decades.

When I was an undergraduate I read a biography of Eugene Debs—by Ray Ginger, I think. It was a most effective book; Debs came across as one who really cared for the poor and downtrodden, one who devoted his life to improving their condition. If I had been from a different background, or more susceptible to the ideology, I might have become a socialist. As it was, I was deeply moved but not persuaded. (It is doubtful that there was any overt effort made to persuade anyone of anything.)

This autobiography of Sidney Lens may have a similar appeal for today's young readers. At any rate, the book is of considerable interest. Sidney Lens is a competent writer, and where ideology is not directly involved, he is often quite candid and can describe objectively. Indeed, the book is disarmingly written by an apparently modest man who gives the impression of trying to tell us how it was, at least as he saw it. There is little overt discussion of ideology, and it is certainly necessary to bring to the book an awareness of how ideology colors things to realize how much

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it has colored this account.

There is very little in our literature about labor organizing. Many history textbooks give the impression that labor unions come into being spontaneously because of worker grievances. Sidney Lens provides a partial correction to this in his description of the difficult job of organizing and maintaining a union. He provides considerable information, too, on the socialist backgrounds of many labor leaders. Beyond that, his account provides insights into what unions might be used for if more radical leaders had their way.

To confound them, I have sometimes asked for a show of hands from a beginning history class in order to find out how many have heard the saying, "Experience is the best teacher." Usually, all profess to have heard it. Then I point out that if they have, they have heard a corruption of the original, which went, "Experience is a *dear* teacher," or, as Benjamin Franklin said: "Experience keeps a dear school; the fool will learn in no other." Some apparently will not learn even from experience. After five decades, Sidney Lens is still an *Unrepentant Radical.* Or, as I would like to have entitled the book, he is *Still in Bondage.* □

On Men & Marines

Edwin McDowell: *To Keep Our Honor Clean;* Vanguard Press; New York.

by Otto J. Scott

Edwin McDowell has set his novel at the U.S. Marine Corps Recruit Depot at Parris Island, South Carolina, during the Korean War. That was nearly a generation ago, and seems, today, to be retroactively regarded as a relatively unimportant interlude. No judgment could be more mistaken, and McDowell's selection of this particular time frame seems, as does almost every other aspect of this remarkable novel, to be tinted with extra values. The Korean challenge to our ability to defend a remote ally was shrewdly chosen. President Truman, whom the newspapers then nearly uniformly portrayed as a buffoon, was shrewd enough to grasp the significance of the challenge immediately. Unfortunately, he chose to blend his response with the Wilsonian-Rooseveltian perfect-world machinery, the United Nations—and that tribunal contained, at its highest level, the very force which set the challenge to a new world order into motion.

The result was a bloody comedy still only faintly understood by the American people and largely denied in official histories. Pentagon orders to field commander MacArthur were sent in duplicate to the U.N., which kept the North Koreans and later the Chinese informed of MacArthur's directives and responses. The general, never one to suffer Washington's follies in silence, complained both privately and publicly, though in veiled language. He also began to keep his own counsel about his next moves, which led to reprimands. The MacArthur persona was, with its ribbons, antique dignity and rodomontade, antithetical to Truman's taste. Some newspapers floated a MacArthur-for-president boomlet, and the president himself exploded and dismissed the general. The charge was insubordination; it might as well have been obsolete patriotism. The resulting presidential campaign led to the election of an undisgraced general, who capped a host of ironies by agreeing to the first full-scale strategic retreat in American history. The entire three-year period, therefore, marked a turn in the road of American fortunes on the world stage that few seemed able to appreciate—then or since. Twenty-five thousand Americans died, over 100,000 were wounded, and a war's meaning was lost amid a flurry of electioneering, confetti and ignorance, while a media-created legend of military insubordination covered the reality of betrayal and the loss of honor in high places. These events created a cascade of psychic dislocations through the land. The word 'honor,' still usable in the early 50's, grew dark and tarnished. The profile of American masculinity, clear at the end of World War II, began to blur with prison-camp defections in Korea and to alter toward the decadence we know so well today.

These off-stage realities hang over *To Keep Our Honor Clean* much as the bloody anarchy of World War I hung over late-20's plays like *Journey's End.* Yet the reader is only subliminally aware of these realities, for McDowell's novel is not political but psychological. His major theme is the meaning and purpose of military obedience; his minor motif is manhood. Adolescents of all ages have difficulties with obedience and are apt to confuse it with subservience. The military, of course, is rooted in obedience; a soldier who will not unquestioningly obey orders can be neither sent into battle nor kept from assassinating his officers.

The question posed by McDowell, an ex-marine, deals with the limits of command and obedience His choice of a Marine boot camp as an illustration is remarkably apt; there are few, if any, arenas in our society that better delineate the painful passage from adolescent to warrior. For purposes of dramatic confrontation, the author has exaggerated his points, but he has done so well within the limits of plausibility. The essence of his novel, and the experience of boot camp, is psychologically truthful and stretches the perceptions of the reader. The angle of perception is classical, taken from Homer—that best of all military writers. In other words, the

Mr. Scott's latest book is The Secret Six: John Brown and the Abolitionist Movement.

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audience is not told what to believe, but is shown that the manner in which a man gives or receives a blow reveals his nature.

The novel opens with blows—from clubs, fists and feet—rained upon the recruits by Tech Sergeant Krupe and Buck Sergeant Bennett, who give the new arrivals a reception more suited to a concentration camp than a military reservation. Corporal Sanders, an assistant drill instructor fresh from his own training, bellows but does not beat the men. The personalities of the ruling trio are quickly sketched and fleshed out in later chapters; as the action proceeds, the reader comes to know and form his own opinions about each of them. This action is, of course, motivated by a desire to make mature marines out of the recruits in the allotted ten weeks. To Sergeant Krupe, this is a task that, if successful, will produce flawless soldiers, men who will not be tricked by savage Asian enemies, and who will not weaken if captured. The last is important, we discover later, because his own brother, captured in Korea, is now making broadcasts against the United States over short-wave radio. Sergeant Krupe is humiliated by this betrayal and labels it treason. Corporal Sanders, who does not believe in violence against recruits, demurs. *"Think of what they must have done to him,"* he says. Fortunately for the emotional pace of the novel, this dialogue comes late in the book, after the reader is already well acquainted with the unstated argument over methods brewing between Krupe and Sanders, while the sadistic Sergeant Bennett creates havoc among the recruits and rage in the audience.

The outlines of the argument are deceptively simple. Sergeant Krupe believes that proper training *can* make a difference. If his brother had joined the Marines instead of the Air Force, he would not have weakened in captivity. Therefore Krupe is capable of placing one massive hand around the thin neck of a late-adolescent recruit and squeezing the right answers out of him: his game is to make a warrior capable of defying the world, but who also obeys his superiors. Upon these points rests the ability to survive and win in war. Krupe, in other words, has decided that absolutes rule the world and constitute the laws of life. Corporal Sanders, however, is a modern man. He acknowledges that Krupe's brother may broadcast for the enemy, but is not sure that means an actual move to the other side. He believes discipline is necessary, but that it should be administered within reasonable limits and civilized rules. He softens the tactics of Krupe and Bennett whenever possible, and resolves to call their abuses to the attention of higher authority. His argument, appealing to intelligence and sensitivity, seems to have the best lines.

What is true of Sanders, however, is untrue of Sergeant Bennett. Bennett is a sadist both physically and psychologically. He not only punches and kicks, but he arbitrarily selects one hapless recruit for loud abuse on completely spurious grounds, homosexuality. This campaign, which evokes horror, is evidence of a deep and implacable malignity; the charge of homosexuality is one that no one can deny without loss of dignity, one that does not need proof to achieve credibility. Its use by Sergeant Bennett is accompanied by other loathsome weapons: he abuses an Indian recruit because of his race. This is unique in McDowell's novel, though, an exception not pursued by the author. Throughout *To Keep Our Honor Clean* there is an absence of contemporary cant and stereotype that is a relief to the reader. The hackneyed Marxist emphasis on class is absent; there are no sociological "flashbacks" à la Mailer, and men behave as spontaneously as in life —and as revealingly.

Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of this novel is that the author's opinion of the Krupe-Sanders argument is nowhere stated. The outcome is not loaded; the issue is left to the reader to determine according to his own experience and wisdom. The only flaw, and this may not seem like a flaw to others, is a love interest which seems more digressive than essential. Even this, however, is treated with a merciful tact; we are spared the usual clinical descriptions of sex that so often betray a novelist who has nothing to say on other aspects of reality. □

Coercive Utopians Then and Now

Gavan Daws: *A Dream of Islands;* W. W. Norton & Co.; New York.

by Arthur E. Hippler

Everyone knows how wonderful, delightful and carefree the unrepressed South Sea Islanders are (or were), uncontaminated by Europeans. Surely theirs was a culture to admire, envy and emulate. But could it be that some of that assumption of happiness and innocence is the result of misperception, or even of projecting oneself into others or even, in part, the outgrowth of a cultural illusion?

Daws wastes no time in this collection of biographies in raising the issue. It's most unpleasant to those who'd like to have their Rousseauian cake and to eat it too. For example, at least part of the reason behind the ease of sexual offering of Tahitian women to European sailors was mercenary. Sex could be traded for iron and goods. Of course, in large part it was simple concupiscence. But it doesn't end there. Sweetness, openness, warmth, honesty and giving ways, on closer examination, became instead commonplace infanticide, bestiality, thievery, despotism, cannibalism

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and even the deliberate raising of people like cattle to be tattooed so that their heads could be cut off and sold.

Could this be paradise? It would seem that perhaps civilization, by comparison, isn't quite as bad as one thought.

How could anyone ever have thought differently? That, in fact, is the burden of Daws's work. He shows how the ambivalence of Europeans—simultaneously attracted to and fearful of savagery, proud of their civilized achievements, but afraid of the price they had paid for repression—spawned some men who were so personally flawed that they could only resolve these tensions in an utterly destructive fashion. That is, while it is true that the cultural milieu provided both positive and negative, creative and destructive possibilities, the individuals Daws looks at were incapable, because of personal deficiencies, of doing anything but accepting the least effective cultural tools at their disposal. It does not take a profound mind to see the striking parallels to their psychological brethren of today who cannot use the positive but only the negative and useless tools available in our culture, but more anon.

Daws first discusses John Williams, founder of the London Missionary Society. In some ways, Williams is the cream of the lot. He saw his work as being the civilizing of what he believed to be the savagery of the South Sea Islanders. Above all he wanted to get the natives to do productive labor. At first he was successful, but then their culture reasserted itself and the children of missionaries became more like Tahitians, which disturbed him no end. Eventually, unregenerate islanders killed and ate him. His story seems to suggest that a naive underestimation of the depth and power of the savage side of human nature can lead to disaster.

Melville, on the other hand, feared for the natives who were under missionary influence, although his fears of debtors' prisons for Polynesians seems to have reflected his own experiences. He was fundamentally afraid of savagery, and he made his heroic Typee girls look all but European in order to dilute their savagery. He, like other utopians, was looking for paradise. But in *Moby Dick* he seems to say it is ridiculous to think that paradise can be uncontaminated by savagery. There seems little doubt that Herman Melville appreciated the power of civilization, but he was fearful of the dark savagery of human nature.

Robert Louis Stevenson was far less perceptive. In an immature way he thought of Samoans as toy soldiers, but he was terrified when savage emotions, which he stimulated by simplistic political maneuvering, turned into real bloodshed. A typical liberal fool, his romanticism—tinged with the ever-present liberal paternalism—brought about real destruction.

Paul Gauguin, however, was no dewy-eyed liberal. His aims were to manipulate and to control, especially sexually, those lower-class women of Brittany and the brown-skinned women of Samoa who did not threaten his precarious self-esteem. He thought of his nature as dual and saw the "cruel side" as "Indian." It was precisely the savage he sought, precisely the primitive he wanted. But it was because he had no capacity for human connection and empathy that he chose Samoans as his guides and victims. They too are well known for their shallowness.

Walter Murray Gibson intruded into the politics of Indonesia and Polynesia to help his small brown brothers, but always with the intent of using them, and with a personality that was clearly disordered.

In fact, what characterizes the romanticizers of the primitive who were selected by Daws is their transparent pathologies, which show up in the guise of an ideological attachment to Rousseauian noble savagery with a tinge of smug, self-satisfied European superiority. What is startling, perhaps even depressing, is the snap of recognition the reader feels when he is reminded, ever so much, of the present. One also feels a sense of nostalgia. At the very least, these fools could damage only a few lives, since their capacity to destroy was limited by logistic and other factors. Today, the coercive utopian who shouts that civilization is decrepit and evil can, amplified by mass telecommunication, propound his half-baked theories to the world, with modern technology providing the nihil obstat to his ideas. Moreover, the media commentator who piously agrees with the utopian, and who, through his own ignorance, is unable to question sharply and coherently the assumptions of the neobarbarian, lends a spurious credulity and—in the cases of our revered elder commentators—a kind of avuncular imprimatur to the proceedings.

The essence of civilization is not, as the island dreamers would have it, a boring lack of sexual excitement nor, as the contemporary barbarians would

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The Conservative Principle

Tyrmand: Editor's Comment; Lynch on Sennett *(Authority)*; Hitchcock on Galbraith *(Annals of an Abiding Liberal)*; Thompson on Nisbet *(History of the Idea of Progress)*; Navrozov on Salisbury *(Without Fear or Favor)*; Tanner on Auchincloss and Hazzard *(The House of the Prophet, The Transit of Venus)*; O'Sullivan on Spitz and Sanchez *(Barefoot in Babylon, Up and Down with the Rolling Stones)*; Moser on Sowell *(Knowledge and Decisions)*; Walsh on Schneider *(The Woman Who Lived in a Prologue)*; Scott on Cowley *(The Dream of the Golden Mountains)*; Schall on Adler *(How to Think About God)*; Gottfried on Schorske *(Fin-de-Siècle Vienna)*; Hilton on Gardner *(Freddy's Book)*; Levine on Zinn and Lader *(A People's History of the United States, Power on the Left)*; Carson on Schmertz and Woods *(Takeover)*; Lawler on de Borchgrave and Moss *(The Spike)*; Commendables; In Focus; Liberal Culture; Journalism; Screen; Correspondence; The American Proscenium.

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have it, the repression of all that is noble in man in favor of contrived and corrupting relationships. Its essence lies in the control and direction of creative energies. This implies, of necessity, the deferral of gratification. But, even more important, no directed and controlled creativity is possible without the tolerance of varying ideas and without civility to govern the discourse concerning them. It is this that the coercive utopians of our time—cousins to the Rousseauians—never understand.

Primitive societies tend toward rigidity of thought and expression, parochialism of viewpoint, poor control over aggression, magical thinking and intolerance for the new. All of this is precisely what the romantics wrongly assume to characterize civilization. The converse is also true. Only in civilized society is equity justice the rule, and only in contemporary Euro-American society is actual social mobility routinely possible and a niche available for every conceivable brand of human peculiarity. But our attention is ever drawn in Daws's book to the issue of sexuality; as indeed it seems so drawn by the ideological outpourings of the coercive utopians. One of the first things most Europeans noticed (at the very least they noticed it!) about Oceania was the ease of sexual expression, and it was one of the most attractive aspects of the South Seas. Certainly that ease existed. As we have noted above, a good deal of it was instrumental in nature, but not all of it by a long shot. Yet, as these observers and others came to know, there was a curious flatness of affect here. Sexual expression was not tied to a depth of emotional involvement which we have come to identify as maturity. If Europeans of the 18th and 19th centuries were more sexually repressed, we may well argue that this was a temporary phenomenon attendant upon a greater degree of personal control which, at the same time, provided them with their far superior culture and intellectual framework and, indeed, quite likely with a greater capacity for mature relationships with others.

Present-day liberal thinkers tend to believe that contemporary Euro-American society is excessively repressive sexually and in need of (what already appears to have been substantially accomplished) an increase in free sexual expression. One is, however, tempted to ask, "repressive in comparison to what?" The utopian's favorite nonprimitive societies, the socialist paradises, are prudish beyond belief. The few primitive societies (the very few) with open sexual expression have other, more terrible, deficiencies. Such a model of primitive society would lead to substantial losses of capacity to relate to others. Indeed, some of our most pathetic casualties are those who took too seriously the dicta to be sexually free, to forget monogamy, to abandon sexual restraint and indulge every whim. Their disorientation, in part caused by the liberal nitwits who encouraged them, is then attacked by the same liberals as exploitative. The evolution of the capacity to express freely one's sexuality while retaining a respect for the hard-won rules governing mature human love is not only possible, it is taking place in our own society. In the absence of a strong core of personal control, unrestrained sexual activity simply leads to chaos for the individual and for society.

And so we stand at a distance, watching Europeans of an earlier century who were entranced by the vision, indeed the chimera, of a perfect pre-Eden society, trying to ignore its defects and projecting its make-believe ideals on a European culture. A closer view reveals the sad truth. Each of these individuals was gravely flawed and had a dramatically damaged personality. Could it be that they were not truly representative of their own society? Could it be that our own coercive utopians, in their vituperative support of irrationality, are equally nonrepresentative?

Our own "noble savage" thinkers have bounced from one god to another —Russia, China, Cuba, obscure peyote-chewing Indians—anything to avoid confronting the realities of their selves, all the while projecting their own imperfections onto society. They, as Daws found of the earlier Rousseauians, don't really want those islands. They want the dream of islands. It's all in their heads. □

The Dangerous Edge

Graham Greene: *Doctor Fischer of Geneva or The Bomb Party;* Simon & Schuster; New York.

by Robert C. Steensma

At an age when most writers are either intellectually dead or have written themselves into redundancy or irrelevance, Graham Greene at seventy-six still writes without any diminution of either talent or freshness. And at a time when the English and American novel has degenerated into the popular kinkiness of a world according to Garp, Greene continues to explore the dilemma of the human spirit in a world from which God has been exiled and replaced by mindless materialism, moral relativism and loveless humanitarianism.

For over fifty years and in twenty-three novels (two of them later "withdrawn") as well as a substantial body of short stories, essays, film reviews and plays, Greene has dealt with humanity's self-alienation from God and the resultant moral chaos in which men and women, like Castle in *The Human Factor,* seek "the interior of that dark continent . . . a city where he could be accepted as a citizen . . . without any

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pledge of faith, not the City of God or of Marx, but the city called Peace of Mind." But having rejected Christianity and politics, they are, like Querry in *A Burnt-Out Case,* nevertheless troubled by their own faithlessness and "keep fingering it like a sore." They move through a desolate moral landscape, unable to understand, as the priest tells Rosie at the end of *Brighton Rock,* "the . . . appalling . . . strangeness of the mercy of God." And if, in the end, they come to any grudging acknowledgment of God, they are likely to echo Maurice Bendrix's perverse prayer in *The End of the Affair:* "O God, You've done enough, You've robbed me of enough. I'm too tired and old to learn to love. Leave me alone forever."

Nearly a decade ago, in his autobiography (*A Sort of Life*), Greene suggested that an epigraph for all of his novels might well be fashioned from a passage in Browning's "Bishop Bloughram's Apology":

> Our interest's on the dangerous edge of things.
> The honest thief, the tender murderer,
> The superstitious atheist, demi-rep
> That loves and saves her soul in new French books—
> We watch while these in equilibrium keep
> The giddy line midway.

Greene's people struggle against God, the world and themselves. Having lost or compromised their religious faith, they wander in the wasteland of the 20th century trying to find some kind of certainty upon which to focus their existence. But they insist upon framing the answers to their questions on their own terms; they will not heed the counsel of the Spanish theologian to "Love God as He is and not as you imagine Him to be."

These are the kinds of characters who move through *Doctor Fischer of Geneva or The Bomb Party,* Greene's latest and shortest (142 pages) novel. They are either people who try to keep their equilibrium on "the dangerous edge of things" or hedonists who have lost their moral balance and fallen into the abyss. All of them have souls, but most of them are damned.

We follow the story of Doctor Fischer through the eyes of Alfred Jones, a plodding agnostic widower in his fifties who is a translator for a chocolate firm in Geneva. He marries Anna-Luise (some thirty years younger), who is the daughter of the enigmatic Doctor Fischer, the inventor and purveyor of a popular toothpaste. The Eden of their marriage is soon invaded by Fischer and his apostles, The Toads, as Anna-Luise calls them, a pathetic group of rich and greedy decadents who eagerly submit to Fischer's humiliations in return for the expensive gifts he condescends to give them at his bizarre dinners.

Despite the warnings of his wife, Jones is ambivalently drawn to the edges of Fischer's circle and attends two parties at which the Toads are further debased by their greed. At the second and final dinner, after the death of Anna-Luise in a skiing accident and his own bungled suicide attempt, he confronts Fischer, calls his bluff, and, because he has finally learned something about life and love in his brief idyll with Anna-Luise, wins a tenuous moral victory. But the five Toads—a decaying matinee idol, a retired Swiss general, a Swiss tax adviser and influence-peddler, a shadowy sybarite, and a blue-haired older American woman—go mindlessly on their ways.

At first glance the story seems to be a reprise of the spiritual agonies of many of Greene's characters, from Pinkie Brown of *Brighton Rock* and the whiskey priest of *The Power* to Doctor Plarr of *The Honorary Consul* and Castle of *The Human Factor*—and a dozen others who confront some kind of supernatural power by whom they are both attracted and repelled.

As Jones becomes fascinated by Fischer, he is warned by his wife, "He's hell," and after Jones observes that "You make him sound like Our Father in Heaven—his will be done on earth as it is in Heaven," she replies, "That about describes him." Hints of Satanism or deity are dropped throughout the story as Jones, for example, sees Fischer as "The King Toad of them all," who creates the Toads just "as God created Adam," "a bit like God Almighty," who tantalizes and rewards or punishes his creations according to their slavish responses to his temptations.

Before the first party Jones suspects that he is being tempted by Fischer. "I'm not Christ," he tells his wife as she alludes to the Savior's temptations in the desert, "and he's not Satan, and I thought we'd agreed he was God Almighty, although I suppose to the damned God Almighty looks very like Satan." But gradually the agnostic Jones begins to see Fischer solely as the embodiment of evil.

As the final party ends, Jones proves invulnerable to Fischer's power and the greed of the Toads. As he looks at the corpse of his tempter, he thinks, "This . . . was the bit of rubbish I had once compared in my mind with Jehovah and Satan." Later he realizes that the death of his wife and the suicide of Fischer have somehow given him a sense of peace: "Our enemy is dead and our hate has died with him, and we are left with our two very different memories of love. The Toads still live in Geneva and I go to that city as seldom as I can." Thus evil is "as dead as a dog, and why should goodness have more immortality than evil?"

Greene has always supplied enough ambiguity to satisfy most critics, and this latest novel creates plenty of puzzles for the symbol-minded. Is Fischer Satan or God? Are the Toads the devil's disciples embarked upon a Ship of Fools for a voyage of interminable pleasure and humiliation? Are Anna-Luise and her mother the innocent victims of the eternal struggle between good and evil? Does Jones represent the man or woman who fights against evil and wins a costly and temporary victory? Greene gives us

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no clear answers, and the allegorical obscurity of the book may well account for its failure to reach the best-seller lists.

Regardless of any precise meaning, the novel reinforces the observation of the failed priest in *The Power and the Glory:* "the world's unhappy whether you are rich or poor—unless you are a saint, and there aren't many of those." Each of the Toads has a soul—starved and pinched as it is, and, as Greene has said of Trollope's clergyman, his "unimportance in the world of the senses is only matched by his enormous importance in another world."

So, after a half-century as a major novelist, Greene continues to be fascinated with the human dilemma in which men and women struggle to maintain their equilibrium on the dangerous edge. He still sees himself as following the tradition of Henry James. In his essay on Mauriac (1945) Greene says that "with the death of James the religious sense was lost to the English novel, and with the religious sense went the sense of the importance of the human act. It was as if the world of fiction had lost a dimension."

With Greene at least, in all of his work, that dimension survives. In the ugly world of Doctor Fischer and the Toads there are no values, no truths, but the apparent absence of these things should not blind us to their existence. □

Robbing the Cradle

An Oak Lawn Community Awareness Group is fighting hard to remove a book from the parents' shelf in the children's room of the Oak Lawn Library. The book is a pictorial album entitled *Show Me,* published by St. Martin Press in 1975 in New York. It presents, *inter alia,* photographs of 10- to 14-year-olds engaging in oral sex and masturbation. The head librarian balks at banning it. He says:

> It is for parents to use with children; it was not intended for children to use themselves . . . as a professional librarian, I have a broader responsibility to the community, and that would include making sure the library is not subjected to the whims of any individual in terms of what other people wish to have available to read.

Indeed, the book was intended to encourage a very specific symbiotic relationship between parent and child. Among other engrossing things, we can read there: "Embraces and caresses [of the genitals] are fun and pleasurable for both children and adults . . ."

The Oak Lawn Community Awareness Group put *Show Me* on public display. Only two persons out of 75 who viewed the book did not think that it should be banned. One of the latter said: "Married couples who view it are shocked. If it disturbs adults, what can it do to children?"

In April 1977, in *The Rockford Papers,* we wrote:

> . . . the worst that is wrought upon youth by *Show Me* is its truculent destruction of children's unique quest for hidden meanings of sexuality which they do not want to have programmed by adults like a school curriculum.

Meanwhile, the San Francisco Public Library has decided to ban *Mary Poppins.* Said the librarian in charge:

> It is not censorship. It's selection after careful review. It is not a very good book.

(RAV)

Liberal Culture

Subhumanity

According to *New York* magazine, a highly reliable source, there is a rising epidemic of heroin use among the well-to-do in that city. People of potential worth to society are pulverizing their psychological equipment, reducing it to the condition of malodorous mush and turning into zombies in droves.

In the time-honored liberal tradition, *New York's* article asks for compassion, understanding and help for those who have acquired "the habit." Free will and simple personal responsibility are not mentioned. In contrast, people who fall for heroin are, with a sort of pride, described as intelligent, sensitive, attuned to "liberal politics" with "strong feminist leanings." Discussing their switch from cocaine — which, during the 1970's, helped them to "explore life in a chatty, loving way"—they offer a rationalization:

> Maybe because this decade is hitting all of us hard, we're after a change of pace, a brief escape. Call it a temporary, reversible *(sic!)* frontal lobotomy.

This, to our mind, is like deliberately opting for subhumanity as a standard of living. Why should we, who believe in humanness as the supreme yardstick of Western civilization, help them at all?

On Human Nature

Edward Albee, a playwright known for his behavioral nonconformism, is producing *Lolita* on the stage. For that purpose, he auditioned a roomful of what the Associated Press calls "aspiring nymphets," no more than 13 years old. Then:

> Before the interview began, Albee warned the 50 little girls that the play includes scenes of 'sexual intimacy.' He added: 'Anybody whose mother isn't interested in having you play that kind of thing shouldn't be involved.' No one left the room.

We're not surprised. Human nature seldom changes, and when presented with a choice between making a hefty amount of money or refusing self-degradation —it most often opts for the first option. So it was in medieval Alexandria and 18th-century London. We thought that in 20th-century America the social ethos was finished with offering pecuniary inducements to child prostitution, but we were apparently wrong. We wonder whether Nabokov would give permission for such a manipulation of his brilliant novel. But Nabokov is out and Albee is in, and the right to injure human lives at their outset now seems to be the law of the land. □

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In Focus

Symons's Scholarship

Donald Symons: ***The Evolution of Human Sexuality;*** Oxford University Press; New York.

by Becki Klute

Mr. Symons, professor of anthropology at the University of California, has written a scholarly treatise primarily for those in the anthropology field. Psychologists, feminists and social engineers will be sorely disappointed if they turn to *The Evolution of Human Sexuality* to prove any of their theories of equality.

Declaring for total value-neutrality and forcibly ejecting God from any theory of evolution, Mr. Symons paves the way for his conclusions by defining his terms, *i.e.* those of the anthropological researcher. He then proceeds to examine several aspects of human sexuality, including marriage, sexual choice, desire for sexual variety, copulation as a female service and physical attractiveness. Using accepted academic research standards throughout, he cites numerous studies with mammals, especially primates, primitive human tribes and contemporary sex research à la Kinsey, Masters & Johnson and Hite (none of whom seem to impress Mr. Symons overmuch).

Mr. Symons admits that ferreting out the evolution of sexuality is rather more difficult than, say, discovering the origin of the opposing thumb. Since humans almost universally have sought whatever privacy is available, and have seldom left traces of sexual preferences or habits in fossilized remains, all research is, at best, educated guesswork.

Natural selection, as Mr. Symons explains it, is the process whereby those who possess advantageous reproductive characteristics (such as regular fertility) reproduce more abundantly than those with less advantageous characteristics, thus increasing the number of people with that particular trait. Much of the behavior included in human sexuality today is the result of prehistoric conditioning and natural selection. For instance, sexual jealousy is a useful emotion which assured the primitive male that his mate would produce only *his* offspring; males are generally larger than females due to ancient competition for mating privileges. Commenting on the apparently universal male desire for sexual variety, Symons maintains that such insatiability assured primitive males of greater reproductive chances.

The basic conclusion of Symons's research is that human sexuality, albeit altered somewhat by the ability to reason and by behavioral restrictions, has evolved in order to assure reproductive success. Even physical attractiveness is important: a female who was young and physically attractive was likely to assure greater reproductive achievement than one who was old; shiny hair, clear skin and sound teeth all indicate good health. Apparently the male's sperm is just as healthy whether he is physically attractive or not.

Mr. Symons's work probably will hold greater interest for students of anthropology than for the general reader. His scholarly technique and style make for a great deal of information, but little insight of more general importance. After all, it is difficult to examine human sexuality with the same degree of precision and objectivity as one would use when studying the sex life of a fruit fly. □

Mrs. Klute is on the editorial staff of the Chronicles.

Lessons of History

Thomas Flanagan: ***The Year of the French;*** Holt, Rinehart & Winston; New York.

Things have changed very little since 1798, when the Irish tragedy Thomas Flanagan narrates is set. *The Year of the French,* though it may be read by certain American liberals as an outcry in defense of the Irish Republican Army, is an eloquent lesson in the brutality of messianic social revolutions. There are no heroic figures in the war that is continuing in Northern Ireland today, or in Flanagan's novel—but rather innocents, demagogues and wistful fools. There are also the calculating outsiders, who have little interest in the origins or immediate consequences of the conflict. These in *The Year of the French* are the French, who hope to plunge the British Isles into civil war. In the real Irish war of today, well, it is those who, like Flanagan's French, provide the arms.

The novel describes an uprising by Irish peasants of County Mayo, in northwestern Ireland, against their British landlords and rulers. The rebellion is far from spontaneous: agents of the United Irishmen have been in Paris for years, negotiating with the Directory for French troops to push the Irish into war. Not that the French were needed to stir up trouble, but the Directory has its own motives. Bonaparte sets sail against the British in Egypt while General Jean-Joseph Humbert lands at Killala in North Mayo with one thousand French troops. England is the target; the fortunes of the Irish are unimportant.

Flanagan's sympathies are, of course, with the Irish, which is one of the reasons he wrote the book. So are those of most Irish-Americans, who know less of Ireland, but yet feel the mystic attraction of that myth-ridden island. No doubt the sad heritage of the Irish is knit closely with old religious bitterness. Thus certain Americans have seen fit to send support to the bloodthirsty IRA, which uses Czech- and Soviet-made weapons and sends student terrorists to the Lebanese and Libyan training schools of the PLO. Grim reality has a way of interfering with fond sentiments and ideological ignorance, as the dreams of Flanagan's Irish are goaded by the French to bloodshed.

But the rebellion would not have happened without the French and the French Revolution, which is, in a way, the central fact of the novel. General Humbert is a personification of the Directory's approach to world affairs: grasping, obsessive, cynical. Humbert knows he is competing with Bonaparte for the Directory's attention, and that his mission is certain to fail. He understands that a show of submission to the spirit of the Revolution will serve him well back in France. He has no intention of conquering Ireland for his Irish allies, but means only to advance his own career.

Flanagan reminds us repeatedly that the rebellion has no chance of success. Like all such so-called popular movements, it

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is built on wide discontent based on often genuine grievances, which inspire grandiose illusions, which are, in turn, fed by demogogic speeches of leaders who are themselves deluded, cynical and monomaniacal. The brief spasm of revolt was characterized by wholesale, merciless killing that startles the reader with its savagery. There are no heroes in *The Year of the French,* only sad intimations of like years to come, elsewhere. (EJW) □

Perceptibles

Charles Gaines: ***Dangler;*** Simon & Schuster; New York.

The number of millionaires in the U.S. isn't growing as fast as it did last year, according to figures from the U.S. Trust of New York, a bank that specializes in such sums. The bank's survey indicates that the percentage of newly wealthy rose 10.3% in 1980, while 15.4% made the mark in 1979. However, this slowing may be just as well, considering *Dangler.*

The novel concerns the wealthy (read: Super Rich) in America: not the ones who made the money, but those who have and spend it. That is, in looking at the rich, there are usually three types: the crusty old man who made the money through his entrepreneurial capabilities and tenacity; his offspring, who were raised in the lap of luxury; and the third generation, who don't know what a wallet is for and who think "work" is a periodic call to their broker. Many members of the Liberal Culture fall into the third group, as can be readily discerned by their support for massive spending programs. After all, they never see the deductions on a paycheck stub.

Gaines, in a pleasurably scathing manner, deals with the third group. The setting of the novel is the Dangler Adventure Camp Wildwood, which is something of a combination of TV's "Fantasy Island" and the film *Westworld.* Here the "campers" stay for $2000 a week, living and dining in luxury, and playing in "a controlled wilderness setting." But as time goes on, Kenneth Dangler, the proprietor, a man described as resembling George Armstrong Custer, takes the controls off things. Gradually, the New Hampshire countryside isn't as friendly as it once was: the campers experience it as it really is. Dangler recognizes that the rich are becoming fat and soft (excluding himself and his wife), and his plan is to make them tough by subjecting them to the rigors of boar hunting, rock climbing, etc.—putting the equipment bought at L. L. Bean to the test. And with all the possible consequences. He wants to form a cadre of People (not any of the 10.3% who made it in 1980) who will "take back the leadership that is rightfully [theirs] by birth and blood." But he doesn't tell the campers of his plan; they must learn the hard way.

The novel is truly in the American tradition: this approach to Americanism goes straight back to Natty Bumppo.

But when all is said and done, one can only think of General Custer's last words at the Battle of Little Big Horn: "We've got them!" Not only are the rich different, but Gaines indicates that they will always remain that way: a Boy Scout may become a millionaire, but a millionaire won't become a Boy Scout. After all, why take chances on picking a morel when the cook can put in a purchase order for truffles? (GSV) □

Waste of Money

Bargain-Basement Kafka

Thomas Berger: ***Neighbors;*** Delacorte Press/Seymour Lawrence; New York.

by William O'Brien

> It was Kafka who taught me that at any moment banality might turn sinister, for existence was not meant to be unfailingly genial.
>
> —Thomas Berger
> *New York Times Book Review,* April 10, 1980

Neighbors is the tenth novel by an American writer whose talent some claim is vastly underrated and whose comic virtuosity, his devotees insist, invites comparison to Twain. In previous works Berger has delved into a variety of literary landscapes, including the Western epic (*Little Big Man*), Arthurian legend (*Arthur Rex*), the private-eye thriller (*Who Is Teddy Villanova?)* and the war story (*Crazy in Berlin*). His latest offering sets out for new terrain, seemingly more humble in scope. Yet that humble terrain is fertile soil: Berger seeks Kafka's sinister banality in the time-honored American ritual of neighborly intercourse.

Earl Keese, a middle-aged, slightly stocky homeowner, is enjoying a quiet early-evening drink with his inscrutable wife, Enid, in their comfortable house nestled at the cul-de-sac of a country road. They share their misgivings about the new, yet-unencountered occupants of the recently vacated house next door —the only other house on the street. The peaceful evening is abruptly interrupted by the arrival of the subjects in question: Ramona and Harry, a young couple whose arrogance and chameleonlike demeanor spark chaos in the Keese household. Earl is the victim of unceasing and incomprehensible harassment from these erstwhile strangers. His bafflement yields to a desperate endeavor for reason and reconciliation, finally degenerating into retribution and rage. Berger satirically orchestrates the farcical escalation of confusion, clashing tempers and finally violence—Ramona's sexual advances followed by accusations of rape (plus a similar charge from Harry), Harry's casual "borrowing" of money and Earl's car, the newcomers' commandeering of the Keese household, mutual destruction of autos, various physical assaults, even homicidal attempts—all with a mingling of sporadic gestures of affectionate friendship, which further bewilder poor Earl. Like Jacob's angel visitors in reverse, Harry and Ramona are devils in disguise who provoke Earl to undesired rage, even alienating him from his wife and daughter. Into the midst of these middle-class pugilistics Berger slips some heady moralizing: " 'A lot of countries are like that,' Harry said. 'Pillboxes at the border, barbed wire, minefields. And who's on the other side? Human beings, just other men.' "

All meant to be quite funny and significant stuff, it seems, a captivating, cutting satire which, like Earl's idiosyncracy of frequent optical illusions ("Perhaps a half-dozen times a

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year he thought he saw such phenomena as George Washington urinating against the wheel of a parked car (actually an old lady bent over a cane)"), soon obscures the thin line separating reality and appearance. But there is a creeping cynicism behind the comedy; oscillating between slapstick and warfare, Berger's chronicle of human relations grows into a preponderant, sardonic accumulation of frontal assaults. With appropriate doses of homosexuality, violence and familial friction, the satire degenerates into the abusive comic ethos of *National Lampoon* or "Saturday Night Live." Like Earl, the reader stops laughing and comes to feel harassed by the humor, and is equally baffled by the apparent lack of motive. The overly abrasive slapstick dulls whatever sinister effect Berger was seeking.

According to the jacket, the novel exposes truth "as brutally as the shame of an exhibitionist who lifts his raincoat in a park." The tone of the metaphor seems an appropriate description of the intertwining of humor and serious thematics—with the further appropriate implication that the exhibitionist is representative of the human experience. Kafka, one imagines, would be puzzled by such an aesthetically dismal vehicle for probing the painful riddle of mankind, and Twain would certainly be dismayed by the state of humor in American letters. □

A Friday of Manhattan Island

Nancy Friday: ***Men in Love;*** Delacorte Press; New York.

Before one reads this book, or even parts of it (its mechanistic and monotonous content makes reading *pars pro toto* the only escape from boredom for anyone with a nonpsychotic attitude toward things sexual), one should have a peek at the back cover. There, one will find a picture of a pleasant-looking middle-aged woman, not unattractive, even engaging. That's Ms. Friday, the author. After delving into the text for as long as one's endurance will allow, one may have to glance at Ms. Friday's portrait again. One may undergo a peculiar optical experience: suddenly, at least to us, it seems as if a large speck of undefinable excrement has been splashed somewhere around Ms. Friday's nose and mouth since our first inspection. Certainly, not everybody may experience such a mirage, but it did occur to us. That's how the book stimulated our fantasy.

Ms. Friday seems to be a perfect example of someone who misunderstood Freud—that illfated doctor, so abused by countless Fridays—but nonetheless decided to make a lot of money from her ignorance. It appears that she will succeed superbly in her intentions. Her preposterous and mendacious "thesis," that men "love" women because, in their fantasies, men pant for unrestricted physiological experiences, is a best-selling proposition these days. The liberal culture daily generates immense audiences for the pop writing about our mucous membranes and glandular excretions: it is as if not figurative dirtiness but actual unwashedness has become the cultural longing of the masses, who are under the spiritual guidance of TV talk shows and the exploitative sexual-therapy industry.

What amazes us is that vast numbers of people are actually buying the uniform, monotonous boredom peddled by Ms. Friday, even though her always-the-same tales about the poorly limited number of motions, orifices and gestures are about as interesting as playing with the ten-digit keyboard of a cash register. She uses the confessions of pornographers *du dimanche,* dabblers in the art of *Hustler,* as her "research" sources; they, of course, use her books as an outlet for their exhibitionist passions—their anonymity notwithstanding. Ms. Friday's own comments are both asinine and brazen—a common feature of deficient thinking and writing. Books like hers, published under the false pretense of social serviceability and therapeutic morality, fill today's America with the cheaply perfumed fetor of a windowless massage parlor. The trouble with all the Fridays on Manhattan island is not that they are neither naive nor goodhearted, but that they turn their smart aleckism into a barbarian shamanlike power. (CC) □

Toffler's Hokum

Alvin Toffler: ***The Third Wave;*** William Morrow & Co.; New York.

> Confusion now hath made his masterpiece.
> —Shakespeare
> *Macbeth*

Alvin Toffler has struck again. In his best-selling *Future Shock,* he bamboozled the public with nonsense masquerading as psychological and social insight. Now, with *The Third Wave,* he has made a quantum leap into advanced gibberish manipulated to appear to be a breakthrough discovery of a new cultural imperative.

You have to hand it to him. He has hit upon, but not invented, a foolproof formula for stardom as a social commentator. Some years back the technique was developed into a high

Social Register

Honors & Awards. It has been announced that the Anti-Defamation League, an American institution devoted to noble moral causes, has awarded to Mr. Hugh Hefner its First Amendment Freedom Award. As is widely known, Mr. Hefner is the founder and chief officer of probably the most successful defamation operation in history: he heads a conglomerate which has modernized and technologized the process of debasing the feminine body to an extent never dreamt of in the brothels of Corinth, medieval Venice or rococo Paris. A Freedom Award may be justified, though, because Mr. Hefner uses only volunteer females. He handsomely pays these ladies to demean themselves, which accounts for his fabulous profits and puts him into an all-time top-entrepreneur category in the annals of the oldest profession. We rest assured that Mr. Hefner's elevation by the ADL was accompanied by his handsome contribution to its coffers. We congratulate both the honorable institution and its honored laureate for their fortunate and edifying partnership. □

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art by Professor Cory, "The World's Foremost Expert." Speaking on some recognizable subject, Cory would dazzle and reassure his audience with a flurry of technical jargon and then, imperceptibly, he would interject little fragments of double talk as he warmed to his subject. The performance would build to a peak of excitement in which the syllables sounded familiar, but the words were few and far between. Cory would then conclude with a clearly articulated statement that that is why these things are so important.

Toffler's concluding line is, "Like the generation of the revolutionary dead, we have a destiny to create." What has happened in the preceding 458 pages is not altogether clear. It would be an interesting exercise to ask any ten people who have read the book what they think Toffler means by his Third Wave. If any two of them think they can define it, it would be, I believe, an atypical ten. The best I can do is that the Third Wave is what is happening now.

In this regard, Toffler, the journalist, has amassed a dazzling and reassuring array of facts from the forefront of discovery and change across the whole spectrum of human activity. Toffler, the commentator, offers many plausible interpretations of why these things have come about. It is Toffler, the philosopher, who goes off the deep end.

During the course of the book, he emphasizes the pervasive disintegration of the political, economic and social institutions which, in the past, made it possible for people to live and work together in some reasonable degree of harmony. What he fails to understand is that it is the human impulse to do whatever one pleases—the view of life so long championed by Toffler and other pop gurus—that has caused the social mechanisms to break down. Once or twice he borders on a recognition that self-interest cannot reign supreme, that it must be balanced by an acceptance of obligations to the group, but he overcomes those flickers of insight and proclaims the amorphous society of personal preferences to be the triumph of our day and the wave of the future.

We will not be rescued from fundamental civic confusion by word wizards who overwhelm us with enthusiastic assertions that social chaos is the formula for creating the New Jerusalem. The book would be harmless enough if it had not been so widely hailed as genius, acuity and oracular prophecy. In competition with pleasure boats burning off the Alaskan coast and oil fields ablaze on the sands of the Middle East, a mere massacre of common sense doesn't get much attention. But it should. (JAH) □

That's Entertainment

Eric Van Lustbader: ***Ninja;*** M. Evans & Co.; New York.

A quick glance at the back cover of best sellers can be an elucidating experience: the portrait of the author says a lot. The author of *Ninja* looks like a man consumed by sultry urges that are all on sale; his bedroom eyes say that everything is just a matter of price. Going back to his *oeuvre,* one quickly discovers that both its message and its literary fabric are made of best-selling gore. The characters, plot and dialogue are all composed of slimy substances—mostly blood and sperm—concocted into the delight of the modern American publisher. People either murder each other or copulate; most of the action takes place in morgues, assassination sites and beds. Mutilation, mayhem, rape seem to serve as punctuation marks.

The publishers will always defend that genre with the help of the First Amendment and the specious argument that they are only giving the public what it wants. If the best-seller lists are smelly affairs, the publishers maintain that it is because the lists only reflect contemporary reading tastes (and the slick, semiliterate reviewers will always agree). Some believe that the best thing is to ignore both the tastes and the books that cater to them, but we feel that this attitude is profoundly wrong. The putridity of so-called "release" novels has to be confronted *somehow.* We do not advocate their prohibition—they are still a bargain if they are the price of freedom of expression. But what about denying them their free ride? What about making them so odious and dishonorable that people will think twice before buying them? What about starting a new fashion of contempt for all the various brands of Lustbaders? It could turn into quite a vogue. □

Cap-Gun Noises Somewhere

Alan Crawford: ***Thunder on the Right;*** Pantheon Books; New York.

It's an unprepossessing book, a sort of journalistic report, poorly written and meager in substance. Mr. Crawford accuses people in the right-wing conservative camp of *believing* in their principles and of striving to bring about the political prevalence of their beliefs—which they intend to do within the accepted democratic process. However, he's able to prove neither erroneousness in their convictions nor unsavoriness in their political methods. Therefore, one must conclude that Mr. Crawford—who was once a member of that same conservative group but became a conscientious objector (or renegade?)—is motivated by feelings other than the simple pursuit of truth, or even the desire for a meaningful discourse with those whose points of view differ from his own. □

Publishing in America

Mr. Morton L. Janklow, an executive of Janklow Associates (a high-powered literary agency in New York) and one of the most influential entrepreneurs in the realm of American publishing, elaborates on the sacred mission of bringing out books in the native land of Melville, Twain, Hemingway and Faulkner:

> Too many decisions in publishing are just seat-of-the-pants decisions... Colgate, for Christ's sake, won't *think* of introducing a new toothpaste without finding out things like 'Do people like mint?' and 'Do they like green? Or is green an offputting color?' □

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Screen

The Portrait of an Artist as a Kvetch and Other Trivia

Stardust Memories; Written and directed by Woody Allen; United Artists.

My Bodyguard; Written by Alan Ormsby; Directed by Tony Bill; 20th-Century Fox.

Hopscotch; Written by Bryan Forbes and Brian Garfield; Directed by Ronald Neame; Avco Embassy Pictures.

by Eric Shapearo

Woody Allen has a sense of irony. He has neither a sense of compassion nor a sense of sacrifice. This is why he is a comedian of the immaterial. His prime source of humor is a pimple on the nose, or on the backside—the ultimate in discomfort, his version of existential misery. In good Brooklynese—his native tongue—he is a kvetch. Neither Chaplin nor Keaton—not even Laurel and Hardy—were kvetches. They all measured their misfortunes against formidable odds and their defeats, although funny, were serious. The human mishap can attain another dimension through laughter, but only laughter which contains the potential for heartwarming afterthoughts can produce funniness. The comical must somehow be a coefficient of deliverance.

Mr. Allen may say that in *Stardust Memories,* rather than looking for fun, he is trying to probe the depth of his frustrations, his plight as an artist who wants to be serious and to say something momentous, but finds that no one understands him. This is an ageless complaint of artists but, both as a real person and as the protagonist of his autobiographical movie, Mr. Allen is a king of life, a worshipped cineast, the idol of the New York jet set and film industry, the object of dreams of teenage girls and middle-aged female predators. Watching him, we wonder what this little twerp, besieged by gorgeous women and basking in all triumphs of existence, has to gripe about. He tries to tell us in his monologues, but, with the exception of a few one-liners, his dialectic is boring. Thus, his plight is boring and hardly worth preserving by way of a movie.

To expound the subtlety and nuances of the malaise that oppresses his soul, Mr. Allen uses the artistic methodology of overlapping realities—that is a hodgepodge of factual and semifactual states of being, a formal scheme that deliberately jumbles up fact and fiction and does not make any distinction between fantasy, dream, actuality. In *Stardust Memories,* Mr. Allen plays a film director who attends and discusses the screening of his latest movie in a place which looks like Atlantic City, but we know nothing for certain about what is going on, where or why. This sort of avant-garde mishmash started in the theater before World War I, has been modish in novels since the 20's, and attained its cinematic peak in the works of European movie directors in the 50's and 60's. Yet antirealism is still considered the latest thing, especially when it is supposed to relate the confessions of an artist. In fact, employing this gimmick is much easier than incorporating any rational order when conveying human dilemmas: to portray the drama of moral and existential disorder Shakespeare, Ibsen, Griffith, John Ford, Fellini trudged through the rigid necessities and requirements of artistic order. Mr. Allen is unconcerned about such obligations. A bit of disarming charm here, a speck of witty remark there, suffice for a structural message.

The name of Fellini is continually mentioned in the reviews of *Stardust Memories,* and with good reason. The movie seems either a takeoff or a parody on Fellini's 8½. This inclination to compete with Fellini results in a sort of visual Italianization of *Stardust Memories'* visual texture: one cannot even be sure whether the picture takes place in America. The music—and Mr. Allen has impeccable taste in music—is nostalgically American, and there are superb cuts from all periods of jazz. Yet even the score seems affected by this Euro-American hybridity: The main theme, "Body and Soul," is played by Django Reinhardt, the great French guitarist.

Fellini is a master at imbuing the ugliness and vicissitudes of his characters with dignity, commiseration, warmth,

Liberal Culture

ERA—Where Are You When We Need You?

It has been reported on television that some of the female passengers who were rescued from the luxury liner Prinsendam—which went up in flames off the coast of Alaska in one of the more spectacular sea disasters of recent times—felt embittered that the order to abandon ship was accompanied by the order: "Women and children first!"

We think they have a legitimate grievance. If the ERA should ever pass, it will be easy to sue the skipper for sex discrimination. □

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humanness. Faced with unprepossessing platitudes of looks and behavior, Mr. Allen does not know how to generate painful sarcasm; instead, he begins to kvetch that life has sentenced him to coexist with triviality. The movie begins with a sequence in which Mr. Allen is in a railway coach filled with appallingly sordid human faces; he seems very, very ill at ease. He seems not to suspect that his own face is not much better.

* * *

My Bodyguard is about rudimentary justice. Somebody is bad and he should be punished; someone is good and he should be rewarded with the final triumph. Such a reality of moral and existential symmetry is desirable to everyone—one's capacity for more complex views of the universe notwithstanding. Thus, when, at the end of the movie, the two good guys who were victimized either by life itself or by the bad guys or both ultimately mete out physical comeuppance to the forces of evil—embodied by one punk and one mini-punk—the audience spontaneously bursts into rousing applause. This moment is, of course, much more important than the movie itself, with its meager story, mediocre acting and sluggish direction. It proves the momentous truth that American audiences—in spite of all the efforts of Marcuse, Masters & Johnson, Leary and Lear, *Esquire* magazine, *New York Times*-style movie "critics" and, first and foremost, the brutal radic-liberal Hollywood hustlers—are rooting for blatant, unabashed idealism. That is, American audiences are not yet corrupted at the very core of their faith in the simplest of human decencies.

* * *

It is beneath the dignity of a rational person to buy a ticket to see *Hopscotch.* What its authors and performers have tried to convey to the audience is that the CIA and the KGB are equally bad. The fact that the former defends the American democracy (which assures the people's right to produce imbecile movies and distribute them for profit), while the latter defends the Soviet Union (a government which has murdered 20,000,000 people in its Gulags), is not mentioned in the movie. Until Americans learn to withdraw their monies from the producers of such movies, we can expect nothing to improve on this planet, made wretched by the disseminators of ugly lies presented as entertainment. □

Kelly?

***Xanadu;* Written by Richard Christian Danus and Marc Reid Rubel; Directed by Robert Greenwald; A Universal Picture.**

by Stephen Macaulay

Xanadu is not a film biography of Kublai Khan, nor of S. T. Coleridge, nor is it about the effects of opium eating. It's a cartoon of a movie with Olivia Newton-John as a soft-voiced pop vocalist who appears to be a person who is squeaky clean but is trying like mad to be saucy. And Gene Kelly. Yes, Gene Kelly. Who performs on disco roller skates.

Ms. Newton-John portrays one of the nine Muses (and does, unfortunately, quote Coleridge) who comes to L.A. in 1980 to inspire Kelly and another character. The object of the inspiration: not a historical comedy, tragedy, etc., but a roller disco called—what else?—Xanadu. The nine were the daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne, and the viewer can only hope that Mnemosyne will desert him or her before the last popcorn kernel has been dislodged from between two molars. Drawing the idea of the Muses presented in the film to its natural conclusion, one would now make an apostrophe before taking part in punk rock, hot-tubbing, skateboarding, etc.

The movie should be beneath notice. However, it must be considered since it may mark the trend of musicals in the 80's. Ms. Newton-John, not much of an actress, is quite popular with the young as well as the M.O.R. listeners. She was even presented with an award in Nashville, which is no mean trick for a young lady from the British Empire. And Gene Kelly. The living legend of *Singing in the Rain* and *An American in Paris.* Many of Ms. Newton-John's fans probably can't remember Kelly in anything, and vice versa, but quite a wide range of ticket buyers are covered by this team. Nevertheless, it seems as though the producers didn't want to leave anything to chance, so they hired a rock band that has a phenomenal number of platinum records to its credit, the Electric Light Orchestra, to write and perform some of the soundtrack.

This is a marketing strategy, not an isolated incident. Earlier this year, *You Can't Stop the Music* was released. Its stars are: The Village People, a disco band that touts homosexuality; Valerie Perrine, an actress who is generously endowed with a shapely figure; and Bruce Jenner, Olympic decathlon champ and current TV-commercial champ. This film was even promoted by a Baskin-Robbins ice-cream flavor.

The producers of these films fail to realize that word of mouth can drown out all the hoopla. What are expected to be "big" films have theater lives of mayflies. Thus, the question lingers: Why did Gene Kelly do it? After Fred Astaire's recent marriage to a lady in her thirties, Gene, no doubt, felt compelled to do *something.* □

Mr. Macaulay is a youthful movie fan from Detroit.

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Art

China's Treasures in Bronze

Does the nature of the creative impulse remain the same as it wanders, from artifacts in bronze, jade and terra cotta made by those artisan-artists who lived along the Yellow River under the Xia dynasty (21st century B.C.) through Egyptian architects, Greek sculptors, Trecento painters, Dutch masters, French impressionists, the Bauhaus, all the way down the line to the—*excusez la comparaison*—Walt Disney studio? Many have asked that question, and the answers—as found in libraries full of art history—are somewhat inconclusive. Yet, looking at items in the exhibit of The Great Bronze Age of China at Chicago's Field Museum of Natural History, one feels amazed at the fact that 4000 years ago people knew how to create the presence of beauty in objects, and at the precision with which they infused functionality with elegance—an allegedly recent need of the human soul. Necessity defined the shape of those vessels, wine jugs, cauldrons, pots, censers, but immediately an instinct for embellishment seemed to take possession of human effort. Practical inventions became inventions of art whose refinement could grace Tiffany's display window even today, even if they were produced from alloys other than the rudimentary amalgam of copper and tin.

It is not for us to evaluate the methods of casting bronze or to judge where technological progress was best applied to arts—in Shanxi province, Mesopotamia or Crete—to serve mankind most propitiously. The Great Bronze Age of China makes it quite clear that newness is a suspicious notion in art. However, there is an element of artistic sophistication, perhaps even perversity, which makes the enigma of human existence relevant to every epoch—time and geography notwithstanding. In this respect, the mind-boggling remoteness of the ages was more persuasively linked to contemporaneity by the Tutankhamen exhibits a few years ago. Moreover, the realization that when the Chinese were making such artifacts, Abraham was living in a tent, impresses us only moderately. After all, the message of Abraham transcends everything that can be ascribed to the creative impulse in the arts. □

Balthus

The Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago recently housed a modest display of the works of the French painter Balthus. It was an unsuccessful, if not outright aborted, undertaking. Entitled "Balthus in Chicago," it featured only paintings and drawings owned by private Chicago collectors. Thus, it was modest, if not meager, in quantity—and the first reaction after visiting it was a gnawing feeling of undernourishment. To one who knows anything about Balthus, it was like promising a sumptuous gourmet meal and chasing a hungry guest away from the table after giving him just one delicious bite of a succulent hors d'oeuvre.

Who is Balthus? Although his work has been shown occasionally in New York, Chicago and elsewhere in America since 1938, and he even had a retrospective at the New York Museum of Modern Art in 1956, he's little known in this country. In Europe, his position is towering, and still growing. His full name is Balthazar Klossowski de Rola; he is a Frenchman of Polish origin, an aristocrat "secretive and reclusive . . . shunning publicity and living a life shrouded in mystery." He is considered a painter of the 30's, but he is still alive and his fame and prestige are growing.

Popularly, he is known as a painter of provocative feminine puberty, preceding the *Lolita*-type novelistic exploration of the same theme. Yet Balthus refuses to put his teen-age girls into any slippery situations: they are not banally attractive, and their murky eroticism is never clearly stated or boosted by tinsel nubility. He paints them in flat strokes, with explicit literariness, realistically, but with an accent on visual nuances that are meant to express stylishness in lieu of trivial charms—a neo-elegance forgotten in postimpressionist art. He finds in them some kind of childish malice which becomes an emblem of humanness. In their slouching bodies he discovers drama.

His main title to glory seems to be his restoration of realism as a daringly exciting mode of painting. For more than half a century, we have witnessed the contention in which the opposite to nonfigurative formalism is either complex expressionism or naive symbolism or vulgar socialist realism. Through the sheer intensity of captured actuality, Balthus makes figurative realism valid again. That his medium of communication is that most exhausted of subjects, the adolescent female—fully clothed, but vexingly provocative and opaque at the same time—makes his work not just fascinating but momentous. (LT) □

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Music

Records

by Doug Ramsey

Freddy Hubbard, once an enfant terrible of jazz trumpet, is now 42 and formidable. Hubbard is more impressive on other people's records than on his own, but there are indications, even on his commercially bland Columbia albums, that he is shedding his jazz-rock fusion persona. His most recent recording, "Skagly" (Columbia FC 36418), breaks away from the synthesized routines of his four previous Columbias. If the music isn't notably interesting, at least Columbia is no longer smothering Hubbard in electronic and vocal goo.

On albums by Joe Farrell ("Sonic Text," Contemporary 14002) and George Cables ("Cables Vision," Contemporary 14001), Hubbard displays both power and taste. Until recently, he was likely to let his virtuosity and high spirits inspire a barrage of exhibitionism that obscured his inventiveness. In the two Contemporary albums, Hubbard is exciting, often lyrical and reflective, and his solos have a comfortable dimension of order and thoughtfulness. In "The Trumpet Summit" (Pablo 2312-114), Hubbard can be forgiven his bravado. The competitive juices obviously flowed when he met Dizzy Gillespie and Clark Terry for this studio jam session. It's the kind of thing producer Norman Granz loves to do—throw superior improvisers into an unstructured situation and see how the combination works. This time it was a success. The three trumpeters play beautifully, with Oscar Peterson, Ray Brown, Joe Pass and Bobby Durham providing inspirational support on piano, bass, guitar and drums. On the slow blues called "Chicken Wings," Hubbard begins intimately and softly, then uses a series of dynamic and tonal changes to build a solo of great beauty. There is sloppiness in some of the ensembles, but the playing is the thing, and the playing is superb.

"The Legendary Freddie Keppard, New Orleans Cornet" (Smithsonian Collection R 020) brings together 15 recordings known (or, for two of them, thought) to include a player often discussed as if his style were as mythical as Buddy Bolden's. Keppard may have recorded after his prime, but in the early 1920's he was still most impressive—imaginative as well as powerful.

Often discussed, mostly unfairly, as a Fats Waller imitator, Donald Lambert had his own niche in the stride piano school. Lambert, who died in 1961, could swing passionately, and he possessed impressive technique as well as a piquant, even bizarre, sense of humor. An example of his latter-day playing is available in "Donald Lambert, Classics in Stride" (Pumpkin 110). Pianist Dick Wellstood's liner notes are helpful and funny.

Other Notables:

Lee Konitz: "Yes, Yes, Nonet," SteepleChase SCS 1119. The third album by the alto saxophonist's medium-sized band is as witty and eclectic as the first two, with graceful, pungent solos by Konitz and trombonist Jimmy Knepper.

Dexter Gordon: "Something Different," SteepleChase SCS 1135. The great tenor saxophonist is in grand form in a quartet in which he is complemented and challenged by the young Belgian guitarist Phillip Catherine and by Gordon's favorite drummer, Billy Higgins.

"I Remember Bebop," Columbia C2 35381. Eight bop pianists prove, with varying degrees of success, that the idiom was, and is, glorious. For my money, Al Haig, John Lewis, Tommy Flanagan and Jimmy Rowles are most satisfying. Duke Jordan and Walter Bishop, Jr., two of Charlie Parker's favorite accompanists, are a bit listless. Although Sadik Hakim, a.k.a. Argonne Thornton, has been unjustly maligned, he does little here to redeem his good names.

"Panama Francis and The Savoy Sultans," Classic Jazz 149. The Sultans, under Al Cooper, would often swing other bands off the stand at the Savoy Ballroom in Harlem in the 1930's. Drummer Francis's re-creation of the Sultans catches the spirit and much of the intense abandon that inspired ecstasy in dancers and frustration in competitors. The soloists do not have the swing of the original Sultans, but the rhythm is irresistible. □

Mr. Ramsey is a jazz musicologist in New Orleans.

For Sentimental Cognoscenti

Who, today, remembers the name of Jess Stacy? Or Lee Wiley? Only hardcore jazz sentimentalists and devotees of romantic episodes in the early history of syncopated music. Those are the ones who still get a catch in their throats when Benny Goodman's 1938 Carnegie Hall concert is evoked. That was Stacy's ultimate moment of creative heroism—his unforgettable solo in "Sing, Sing, Sing."

And Lee Wiley? A unique addition to the New York jazz scene in the late 1930's (she was part Cherokee, and

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came from Oklahoma), Wiley did to big-city blues what Edward Hopper did to American urban realism in the arts: she imbued it with unexpectedly subtle emotionalities.

Commodore Records Company recently rendered a great service to all incorrigible sentimentalists: they issued the album *J. Stacy and Friends.* Friends on the disc include Bud Freeman, Muggsy Spanier, Specs Powell and, of course, Lee Wiley. Her "Down to Steamboat Tennessee" is one of the greatest masterpieces of sultry sophistication in the blues mode ever recorded. (CC) □

Loss

In August ABC aired a two-hour special entitled "Heroes of Rock 'n' Roll." The broadcast accurately, if unintentionally, traced the degenerative course of a pop-music style which originated in the big-city streets. The genre, a distinct derivative of jazz and blues, initially epitomized the vitality and robustness of working-class youth. It was a very American urban music, simple and rowdy, rambunctious and sentimental, and it correctly projected the dynamism, tastes and rudimentary bawdiness of the American lower-middle class at a time of American global power and during the prosperity of the Eisenhower presidency. The faces of Chuck Berry, Bill Haley, Buddy Holly, Ray Charles and Elvis Presley tell the whole story. Those are still human faces, images of men who expressed their environment, their lust for life and their cultural allegiances in a raw and forceful fashion.

The musical pattern crossed the Atlantic and produced in England the Beatles, an ensemble commendable for its inventiveness and musicality, if somehow marred by a eunuchoid artificiality. Then came the Rolling Stones with their counterfeit grassroots authenticity and, for unexplained reasons, the factitious, secondhand music from London's Carnaby Street recrossed the ocean to influence, warp and disfigure the American pop scene. American musicians began to serve causes, embrace nihilistic dissolution of moral and behavioral norms, pretend to be "people" and serve people. Actually, most of them were rich kids oozing mannerisms who got their kicks by pretending to be victims of an inhumane society. Dynamics and robustness gave way to frenzy, musicality to shrillness, pedestrian sentiment to cynical, pseudolofty sham. Their faces tell the whole story: Bob Dylan's calculated viciousness, the commercial lewdness of Mick Jagger, Janis Joplin's psychopathological screech, the KISS group's bestiality, and, in due course, the Sex Pistols' and Blondie's imbecilic cruelty.

The host of the ABC program, a Hollywood actor by the name of Jeff Bridges, delivered a commentary in which we could hear him say: "We lost Hendrix, Joplin, Morrison . . ." When he narrated the story of those musicians' premature deaths, however, he chose not to mention *how* those beacons of art had been lost, or that, perhaps, they lost themselves in a limbo of drugs, self-abandonment, hysteria and nervous breakdowns. Actually, oblivious to any societal obligation, they were casualties of a way of life, victims of the very "philosophy" they so fanatically preached in their songs. Nor did he explain why *we* should feel that *we* have lost anything by their early demise. Mr. Bridges sort of suggested that the Woodstock rock orgy was an apogee of American culture and human spirit, but *we* had our doubts about the correctness of his claim.

The pathology of culture is nothing new; there have always been human specimens who were driven by demons, but in the past they ended up as gargoyles on cathedrals. In our time, they end up on the covers of national magazines and in palatial mansions on Malibu Beach or the Riviera. The story of rock music as exemplified by the faces of its high priests is perfectly intelligible: it is a parade which begins with engaging plainness and inoffensive triviality and ends in wicked and frightening ugliness, a process which somehow epitomizes our sociocultural plight. The ABC special confirmed rather than assuaged our fears; we still cannot rid ourselves of a feeling that there is an odor in our culture like that of an untreated disease. □

Correspondence

Letter from Copenhagen:
Women Between Lib and Love

by Thomas Molnar

Our age has the distinction of turning silly projects into mass movements, and militant feminism may be a good example. The Women's Rights World Congress in Copenhagen last July brought to mind once again the cliché comparison to *Lysistrata:* there was no U.N. in Aristophanes' time to lend status to the ridiculous, so the attempt collapsed, and anyway, the Greeks confined the grotesque to the fictional. Even more pertinent, perhaps, is Molière's *Femmes Savantes,* where ludicrous ladies speak such a refined language and display so much false knowledge that they fall prey to men who first tolerate, then manipulate, and finally stop all the

Professor Molnar's latest book is Theists and Atheists, a Typology of Non-Belief.

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nonsense.

During the International Women's Decade—and we are only halfway into it—it looks as if the exploitation of females by males has, if anything, grown. Merely consider the present Western form of that exploitation: pornography. Enter a sex shop of obscene books, films and magazines and you will find yourself in the seat of power (if that is the right word) of phallocracy.

Although many women don't seem to realize it, they are more than ever in the classic situation of the slave whose consciousness is shaped by its master, mainly because masculine mores no longer protect them. Our current feminists form a pitiful army of *precieuses ridicules* and gloria steinems. They look like ideological hermaphrodites between two full-blooded worlds of men and women.

The ten-day convention in Copenhagen was rather like rush hour in an oriental bazaar, and many of the delegates sounded like fishwives. From *this* marketplace of ideas Socrates would have fled to Xantippe.

The passionate and nonnegotiable message of the lady legionnaires seems to have been a proclamation, *urbi et orbi,* that not only do women outperform men in all endeavors, but also that a world of their own design would be full of peace, light and reason, and without war, conflict or inequality. (Why am I reminded of Karl Marx?) This female utopia is illustrated by some of their recent, promising accomplishments: in Denmark, a new party formed by two young women proposed to reduce males to second-class citizenship; Indira Gandhi, while exercising dictatorial powers (what—a woman *dictator?*), let her son deal with the problem of India's overpopulation by having police surround movie houses, collect the males and transport them to sterilization centers. Some 10,000,000 Indians lost their capacity to reproduce. In Indonesia, West Sahara (Polisario), Iran and Nicaragua women gouged out prisoners' eyes, emasculated them, then gagged them with their genitals. The question is: do women have an inclination for the finer type of manual work, or are they just more bloodthirsty?

In Western cultures women have always been recognized as men's equals in the human condition. Even before the advent of Christianity, Greek literature celebrated woman's integrity, virtue, heroism. Antigone, the heroine of rectitude, Elektra avenging her father, Penelope the faithful wife all display the highest qualities of human existence. This was no flattery, nor an abject concession to feminist furies, since repulsive woman types also figured: Medea, who killed her children; Clytemnestra, plotting her husband's murder; Helen, the playgirl of Troy. Under Christian auspices woman's dignity is fully asserted: the veneration of Mary permeates literature and art, and St. Augustine's mother mediated between God and her wayward son for many painful years. Ever since, the female's role in mediation has been inscribed in the great works of literature, which is always the best mirror of an age. Without Beatrice, Dante would not have risen to the contemplation of God. Petrarch looked to Laura as a source of purification. In medieval song and poetry contests, knights and troubadors claimed access to pure beauty through the intercession of noble ladies. Goethe spoke of the "eternal feminine" which completes man's dream and draws him to the heights. Faust hesitated between the soft and forgiving Margaret and the alluring Helen, and was finally saved by the former. In *Crime and Punishment,* Sonia, who had descended to the hell of prostitution, brought the news of eternal mercy to the murderer Raskolnikov. Even the cold Ibsen paid tribute to woman's mediation when he portrayed *Hedda Gabler* as the inspiration for a great work of art.

There are two more recent literary works which display the same preoccupation. In Paul Claudel's *l'Annonce faite à Marie,* Violaine's sacrifice is brought out in a magnificent orchestration; in Solzhenitsyn's *Cancer Ward* the dreary Soviet world becomes humanized for the hero through a woman doctor, the symbol of transfiguring love in the surrounding grayness.

Most contemporary fiction has gone sterile in this respect; its female characters are cynical, drab, competing with men for first place in abjectness. The homogenization of the sexes—ERA's demand for women's presence in the army and in men's toilets—is described better by graffiti than by literature. For literature and art record our passions, whereas egalitarianism, the last passion, abolishes them. Surrounded by feminists, love will have to apply for refugee status. □

Letter from Central America:
Breathtaking Vistas and Gloomy Perspectives

by Edward J. Walsh

The five countries of Central America do not rank high on the scale of the world's important nations. Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Costa Rica, all smaller than most U.S. states, are remote, resource-poor and rough-hewn in terrain. There are no good natural harbors on either coast, populations are small and, except in Costa Rica, not well educated. For many reasons—historical, cultural and political—the Central American countries have long suffered a common problem: anonymity. American policy in the Western Hemisphere has always focused on the large nations. The small countries have—until very recently—been

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largely ignored.

Nevertheless, the region is the link between the Americas. Costa Rica, the region's most prominent country, borders the all-important Isthmus of Panama. North of Guatemala are not only the jungles of Yucatan, but Mexico's new oil fields. Guatemala, too, has some oil reserves, and Honduras is conducting drilling tests. What's more, the strategic importance of Central America has long been recognized by Fidel Castro, who, twenty years ago, saw an opening in the chronic political impermanence of the region and has been sending arms and agents there ever since.

In July of 1979, Cuba's support was crucial to the overthrow of Nicaragua's long-time dictator, Anastasio Somoza, by rebels calling themselves Sandinistas. Today, the Nicaraguan government is composed mostly of Cuban-style revolutionaries. They are not firmly in control, however, having some trouble with the same Nicaraguan people whom they claim to love so much. The ruling Sandinista *Frente* of nine Marxists who were recognized by practically no one when they marched into Managua last year has issued economic decrees that have been ignored or subverted, and the response to Marxist indoctrination efforts, even in the Sandinista army, has been somehow different from what we can read in the American liberal press.

The Nicaraguan revolution, with its omnipresent red-and-black flags and crowds of heavily armed soldiers standing around, a year afterward, is a depressing signal to other Central American governments of what may come if the living conditions of their people are not improved. In Managua one sees miles of burnt and bombed-out rubble, still untouched, along the highway from Augusto Cesar Sandino International Airport to downtown. Moreover, there is no downtown. The center of the city is a vast empty area, left in ruins by Somoza after the 1972 earthquake that killed 10,000 people. There are a few shattered hulks of office buildings, used as barracks for troops, surrounding the multistory Bank of America, the only tall structure left standing. The once-busy business district is eerily deserted, save for a few miserable squatters in the ruins. Former building sites are overgrown with weeds and tangled vines, reverting to the jungle. The Sandinistas have built a children's playground, circumspectly without structures of any height, near the bank building; it is said that the area is riddled with geological faults.

It is also reliably reported that Somoza, after the earthquake, pocketed millions of dollars of donated relief funds and bought large tracts of cheap land on the outskirts of the city. The government then conveniently built roads through the land, and his ill-gotten holdings soared as much as one hundredfold in value. Thirty-five thousand Nicaraguans were killed in the anti-Somoza revolution, and 100,000 were wounded. The tragedy of Nicaragua is a searing lesson to be remembered throughout Latin America.

* * *

Guatemala presents a crisis that is developing more slowly. It is a mountainous and beautiful land, which attracts tourists but hinders economic and social development. The rugged volcanic peaks in the southwest quadrant of the country are as high as 14,000 feet above sea level. Below are deep valleys and, away from the cities and towns, nearly impenetrable jungle. The harsh land tortured the Spanish conquistadors who came searching for gold early in the 16th century, and who established the Kingdom of Guatemala, which originally encompassed all of the Central American Isthmus, after years of fighting the Mayan and Quiche tribes. The white men massacred and enslaved the Indians, and died in droves themselves in warfare and of tropical diseases. European women did not arrive until years after the settlements had been established; consequently nearly all Guatemalans have some Indian blood, and 60 percent of them are pure Indian.

To a very great extent, Guatemala's current bloody battle with Marxist terrorists is affected by its demography and geography. The Indians, who are very poor, speak native languages in their mountain villages and often shun contact with Spanish-speaking outsiders. They live in remote places with colorful names like Quezaltenango and Chichicastenango, which have become tourist stops, but yet have resisted government efforts to raise their standard of living. Meanwhile, the Indians have been the target of careful Marxist proselytizing originating in Cuba. Castroite agents, equipped with knowledge of Indian languages, have done a lot of work to implant distrust of the government and its representatives. In years past, of course, Castro tried to export revolution by sending middle-class students into the fields to exhort peasants. That effort largely failed, and the symbol of its failure was the ignominious death of Che Guevara in Bolivia. There is not much evidence that the new approach is working, but terrorists of the EGP (*Ejercito Guerrillero Pobre*—Guerrilla Army of the Poor), who compose the outlawed communist party, are still murdering farmers, priests, soldiers and businessmen.

Then, too, official government efforts to combat leftist terrorism are handicapped by violence committed by ultra-right groups. Students, union leaders and others—often known Marxists, but not always—who have criticized official policies have been murdered by secretive right-wing organizations, *e.g.* the "White Hand." It may be that the identities of their members are less mysterious to well-placed Guatemalans than to an American visitor who spends five days in the country. They are said to be both wealthy businessmen, long accustomed to having their own way, and serious-minded but desperate common people who simply believe the Guatemalan government is ineffective at fighting communism. But the govern-

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ment, which emphatically disavows the right-wing vigilantes, must do more to eliminate them if it is to shed its undeserved image as a right-wing military dictatorship. The Marxist strategists in the mountains, anonymous, as were the Sandinista leaders in Nicaragua, no doubt celebrate whenever one of their student pawns, whipped up by ideology, commits some violent act and is shot by a soldier or ultraright agent. Their strategy is an old one: goad the government into a repressive crackdown, then capitalize on the popular dissent that follows. It is a ploy the government can and must sidestep by rigorously prosecuting terrorists of both left and right.

Most visitors to Guatemala see little evidence of the secret war that is being fought across the country. It is a tourist paradise, with breathtaking mountain vistas, spectacular lakes and fascinating reminders of its exotic Spanish and Indian heritage. But the tourist business has slackened, understandably—Guatemala has had a bad press. Despite the suggestions of some media outlets, however, the government is not a dictatorship. Elections have been held every four years since 1966, and the president, although an army general, is actually a moderate liberal on the Latin American political spectrum. The press is very free—too free, in some minds, since the political violence gets regular front-page coverage in both of Guatemala City's major dailies. It's obvious that Guatemala has several long-term battles on its hands: with the Marxist terrorists, with the endemic social problems they attempt to exploit and with the ultrarightists who play into their hands.

* * *

On arriving in San Jose, the capital of Costa Rica, one hopes for respite from news of political crisis and chaos. Costa Rica is the right place for a vacation: the weather is mild and clear, without the heavy swampland humidity of Managua, but retaining the mountainous skylines of Guatemala. Costa Rica, everyone tells you, is different, and it is true for many reasons. The country is the southernmost of the Central American nations, made remote by distances. Costa Rica thus avoided the obsessive and cruel attention of the gold-hunting conquistadors, and was settled later by middle-class farmers of Spanish and Italian ancestry. The Indian population is negligible, about 20,000 in a nation of 2,000,000, thus the feudal *encomienda,* or plantation system, which led to class hatred and conflict elsewhere, did not develop here. Since 1949, Costa Rica has been a stable democracy, confident enough of its political strength to do without a standing army.

One senses an almost tangible calm in San Jose: the political and economic nightmare of Nicaragua, immediately to the north, and the bloodshed of El Salvador and Guatemala, more distant, are considered worlds away. Local businessmen stump enthusiastically for American investment, calling their country the "Switzerland of Central America," but saying nothing of Costa Rica's national budget, which is perennially deep in the red. Even so, more Americans live and work here than anywhere else on the Isthmus.

What is most striking is the indifference to affairs elsewhere in the region. A Chamber of Commerce official bristled at the suggestion of an article lumping Costa Rica with its troubled neighbors. Problems in other places are largely ignored here. Yet the government of Costa Rican president Rodrigo Carazo has not been inattentive to political changes nearby. He supported the Sandinistas next door, but a period of tension ensued as Nicaraguan refugees poured across the border. Nevertheless, Carazo was invited to the *"19 de Julio"* festivities in Managua that commemorated the first anniversary of the revolution. Other guests included Castro, Yassir Arafat and representatives of North Korea and North Vietnam. After the gala affair, American Ambassador Lawrence A. Pezzullo was quoted as having said that Castro "said some very nice things about the United States."

Only a few years ago, nearly everyone said nice things about the U.S. Now, only the leftists and Marxists do. The Guatemalan government, for one, is cool towards Washington because of the Carter human-rights position, which often cites a report by Amnesty International, that, in turn, quoted without source citation a remarkably objective Guatemalan government study of the country's problems. The trouble in Guatemala is not a lack of honesty, but a lack of American support. Nicaragua is different. There, independent businessmen who financed the war against Somoza are fighting to mitigate the ideological meanderings of the Marxists, who are in office but not necessarily in power—and the businessmen are winning some battles. The last chapter in that sad story is yet to be written.

Much has happened in these five countries in recent years to reinforce the tragic and violent texture of Central

Liberal Culture

Give Me Your Huddled Masses . . .

An ad in the classified section of *Village Voice,* the organ of Compassion & Co., Inc. reads:

Lesbian & Gay Cuban Refugee Relief Comm.

(212)242-1212c/o M.C.C.

Needs sponsors, donations & support svcs. Spanish interpreters urgently needed to assist sponsors of lesbian & gay Cuban refugees.

Land of the free, anyone? □

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America's history, which is in part the history of the Americas. Western culture took centuries to seek roots here, and the settling-in is not yet complete. A short visit to the region teaches only that a rich heritage is at stake, as communist encroachment continues and increases. Four hundred years of nearly unrelenting violent changes have taught Central Americans to look at the future with fear and doubt. The visitor learns how to think that way, and departs this vernal, rugged land, with its dark, cloud-swept peaks, wondering somberly if, on returning, anything will be the same. □

The American Proscenium

Religion & Politics

When a priest heads a strike committee of California grape pickers and initiates his church's prayers for their cause—this is *not* mixing religion with politics.

When a bishop asks his diocesans not to vote for a self-avowed supporter of abortion—this *is* mixing religion with politics.

When a Catholic priest stole and burnt government documents to promote defeatism during the Vietnam War, and exhorted other Christians to do the same—this was *not* mixing religion with politics.

When an evangelical Christian tries, with the help of the ballot, to restore in public schools what he believes is decency and normalcy—this *is* mixing religion with politics.

When a Brazilian prelate, a Lebanese Greek Catholic clergyman and the Protestant National Council of Churches openly support, with sermons and money, either the Communist Party or the murderous terrorists and guerrilla movements in Latin America, Africa and Asia—this is *not* mixing religion with politics.

When an American presidential candidate promises tax relief to parochial schools and mentions his personal preference for singing Christmas carols in the classroom—this *is* mixing religion with politics.

This is what we have learned during the last electoral campaign in our country. It was an edifying lesson. It taught us that what the American liberal accepts as democracy is a sociopolitical arrangement in which *only* his moral principle is good and democratic. Some would call it a double standard. We call it totalitarian liberalism.

Nothing illustrates (perhaps inadvertently) the cynicism of the liberal mind better than a story on CBS's "60 Minutes" program, in which Mr. Dan Rather interviewed some evangelical Christians who had turned to politics to defend their values. Mr. Rather, having difficulty concealing his own instinctual hostility toward those Christians, threw in their faces accusations like smug indifference for the needy, callous unconcern for poor people, etc. Jesus, Mr. Rather pontificated, had taught about compassion and responsiveness to material misery, while Mr. Rather was unable to find traces of Christ's teachings amidst the current evangelical struggle against prurience and homosexuality. One glimpse was enough for anyone—with even less than Mr. Rather's touted quick-wittedness—to ascertain that the interviewed, photographed and televised evangelicals were precisely *poor people,* particularly in comparison to Mr. Rather, who is a millionaire, and hardly fit to lecture impecunious Americans about how they should feel and what they should treasure in life. If they choose to defend spiritual riches above economic concerns, Mr. Rather has no moral right to criticize or scoff at them. If Mr. Rather had attempted to examine the intellectual dimension of their simplistic anxieties and mistrusts, his professional and personal arrogance might have been tempered. But how could we ask the Rathers of the liberal American television universe to use intellectual analysis when being an ignoramus reaps so many rewards?

During the electoral controversy, an ultraliberal Southern Baptist pastor from Atlanta told a reporter: "When church and state go to bed together, they do not make love or produce offspring. One always rapes the other." The profundity of his thought is in direct proportion to this cleric's all-consuming passion for chic verbiage and correlates well with his mental incoherence. For having a Christian mind, he seems strangely ignorant of the circumstance that going to bed together implies free will, which rules out rape.

Historical Footnote

During the Gdansk drama the world watched with suspense as Polish workers waged an imposing struggle against Marxist-Leninist tyrannical mega-orthodoxy, and everybody waited for Soviet intervention—which did not materialize. The question was: Why?

The feeling in Poland at that time was that the Kremlin power center preferred Carter to Reagan. As a rule, the Kremlin prefers Republican presidents: they do not make wars, and they are not so given to international idealism and moral sloganeering as the Democrats. However, Carter appointed Cyrus Vance, the Kremlin's most beloved secretary of state in recent history. Vance had left by then, but his people in the upper echelons of the American foreign-policy establishment stayed. Carter's erratic and shallow bellicosity was less of a problem to the Soviets than the possible disappearance of all those who, over the last four years, had smoothed the way for the execution of Soviet designs in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Such insurance apparently was worth

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a giant concession, one with which the empire still could cope within its confines at a more propitious time, as long as its global affairs were safeguarded by Carter's policies.

Blessed Complacency

The Libertarian Party was noticeably in the running during this election, and its theorists will find a multitude of excuses to explain its meager showing. We, however, were quite impressed by its foreign-policy theory, which seemed to be based on a comfortable historical illiteracy. Mr. Ed Clark, Libertarian presidential candidate, when asked during the campaign about his proposed foreign policy, explained that we should no longer try to be the world's policeman (as if we ever had). And he added:

> [The U.S.S.R. is]... a cautious predator rarely making bold or sweeping moves from its own borders. It is a large backward country, still only semi-developed and not even able to feed itself.

That's exactly what the last Roman emperors—from Theodosius to Julius Nepos and Romulus Augustus—said about the Visigoths, Ostrogoths and Huns, and that's how medieval Europeans spoke about Batu Khan and his golden hordes: just backward, semideveloped people who were not able to feed themselves. Which is precisely why they became predators. And—as zoology teaches—a predator unopposed is seldom a cautious predator.

The Nobel Prize

The Nobel Prize in literature this year was given to Czeslaw Milosz, a Polish poet of eminence in his native culture and presently a professor of Slavic at the University of California at Berkeley. Many have read political overtones into this honor being awarded to a Polish writer: after all, the events of 1980 have certainly been influenced by Polish achievements in the never-ending showdown between the forces of freedom and the forces of tyranny in Eastern Europe. The distinction of an emigré intellectual opposed to oppression in his country does have significance, but the stature of Mr. Milosz himself cannot be denied. His is not a so-called regional award, so often bestowed by the Swedish academy on an author who is representative of a particular national culture and heritage. Mr. Milosz is a poet's poet, a mentor, a teacher, a pioneer in certain areas of reflective poetry whose importance and influence upon modern European poetic workshops cannot be discounted.

He is perhaps better known as a philosopher of culture and an essayist of consequence. A social democrat who initially wished to compromise with the victorious communist authorities in post-World War II Poland, he was rewarded with high diplomatic posts in Paris and Washington. In 1951, having concluded that the totalitarian grip over men, societies and conscience had become unbearable, he defected and joined the Polish political exiles in the West. He then wrote and published a volume of literary essays, *The Captive Mind,* whose impact on the collective consciousness of Western intelligentsia is compared to that of Orwell's *1984,* Koestler's *Darkness at Noon,* the novels of Silone and the political tracts of Milovan Djilas.

One should notice that all recent Nobel laureates from the Eastern European cultural realm—a Russian, a Polish Jew and a Pole from Lithuania (Mr. Milosz was born there)—are now residents of the United States. There can be no more telling argument to emphasize which political and cultural entity in today's world is the only genuine refuge for independent thought, the only gener-

In the Mail

View from the Capitol Dome (Looking Right) **edited by John H. Rousselot and Richard T. Schulze; Green Hill Books, Caroline House Publishers; Ottawa, Illinois and Ossining, New York.** Ideas and analyses by twenty members of the House Republican Study Committee on the Congress, economy, bureaucracy, foreign policy and environmentalism.

Pornography: A Christian Critique **by John H. Court; InterVarsity Press; Downers Grove, Illinois.** An investigation and evaluation of the arguments used to support pornography, and an informed and practical Christian response.

Amazing Grace **by Robert Drake; Wm. E. Eerdmans Publishing Co.; Grand Rapids, Michigan.** Says Cleanth Brooks, "His genuinely comic (yet genuinely sympathetic) stories of life in the rural and small-town South also afford a sound picture of life in an older America, north or south."

The Economic Responsibility of Government **by Milton Friedman and Paul A. Samuelson; The Center for Education & Research in Free Enterprise (Texas A&M University); College Station, Texas.** Transcript of an "interesting, enlightening, and intellectually stimulating" program featuring these two Nobel Laureates.

The Anti-Redlining Rules **by George J. Benston; Law and Economics Center (University of Miami School of Law); Coral Gables, Florida.** An analysis of the Federal Home Loan Bank Board's proposed nondiscrimination requirements.

The Perils of Regulation: A Market-Process Approach **by Israel M. Kirzner; Law and Economics Center (University of Miami School of Law); Coral Gables, Florida.** A critical assessment of economic regulation including Austrian arguments against socialist central planning and a discussion of the "market discovery process."

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ous shelter for independent art, the only asylum for the human and intellectual substances that communist totalitarianism deems its most lethal enemies and is resolved to eradicate.

The Religious Heritage Award

Probably in a moment of contrition or nostalgia, President Carter named October 6, 1980 as a National Day of Prayer. Religious Heritage of America, Inc. took him at his word and, under the leadership of RHA president W. Clement Stone, planned its 30th Annual Convention for that day—thus lending substance to form.

Among the award recipients was Dr. John Howard, president of The Rockford Institute, who received the Outstanding Educator Award. The award acknowledged Dr. Howard's three decades of educational service characterized by a strong emphasis on religion and transcendent values. Among the specifics cited were his speeches, articles and lay sermons, his activities in behalf of religious education as a director of the British Farmington Trust, the expansion of campus religious activities during his tenure as president of Rockford College, the religious emphasis in The Rockford Institute's national conference on the family, and his responsibility for choosing the religious theme for the 1980 annual conference of the Philadelphia Society and his editorship of the book, *Belief, Faith and Reason,* which is comprised of the lectures from that conference.

The Gold Medal Award was presented to Dr. and Mrs. Norman Vincent Peale in recognition of more than 50 years of superior achievement in the ministry. □

Journalism

Chicago Tribune's Neophyte Spirit

The *Chicago Tribune* is, so to speak, a liberal convert. Some people can remember an ideological visage different from the one which now graces the pages of "Tempo," the section devoted to morals and manners. It's this novice standing which forces the *Tribune* to do things the *New York Times* would never do: the *NYT* are respectable liberals who need not prove themselves further. But the *Tribune* is an arriviste who must earn its liberal accreditation through hard exertion. So the *Tribune* serializes books that its editors expect will enhance the paper's liberal prestige.

It culls these books from the best-seller list, in itself a suspicious practice. Then comes a bizarre selectiveness. Both Professor Milton Friedman and Mr. Phil Donahue had books on this year's list and both are Chicagoans, but only Mr. Donahue's book was serialized, despite the fact that Mr. Friedman's defense of capitalism was much higher on the lists and infinitely more entertaining than Mr. Donahue's radical confessionalism. Neither Mr. Kissinger nor Mr. Nixon can expect to have their best-selling foreign policy elucidations serialized, but *Midnight Express,* one of the drug subculture's most scurrilous manifestos, was prominently displayed in "Tempo's" columns.

This summer, the *Tribune* made available to its readers a miserable attempt to glorify sexual debasement in America. Mr. Gay Talese's *Thy Neighbor's Wife,* destined by its Manhattan publisher to be the blockbuster of the decade (it was a doleful flop with the reading public), was serialized in order to prove the *Tribune's* liberal honor and allegiance.

The choice was splendid. Mr. Talese's *oeuvre* ought to provide the *Trib* with a perfect conduit to libcultural recognition. It is a book about modern brothel owners written from the viewpoint of brothel consumers. The brothel is an institution which converts sexual feelings into money, one which sells sexual satisfactions of every variety. *Playboy* is, in fact, a visual brothel, or perhaps a media brothel. Sandstone, the sexual-therapy retreat and Mr. Talese's contemporary Paradise Regained, is a brothel in that it perpetuates the ageless function of bordellos, which, in the Mediterranean tradition, have always been credited with wholesome influences on man's ego and psychical balance. Mr. Talese's book is mean and ugly: it portrays utterly sleazy people and takes the side of the modish wreckers of sexual standards. It is full of cheap pretentiousness and endless hints about its own "objectivity," "research," "impartial reporting." The *Tribune* did not see fit to render any editorial interpretation, commentary or sociomoral evaluation.

Not long ago, the *Tribune's* film reviewer bitterly bewailed the eradication of the vestiges of sensitivity among movie-goers who watch sex-exploitation pictures. Does the *Tribune* perceive any connection between Mr. Talese's propaganda of license and the mounting, all-engulfing wave of torpor that threatens the moral balance of this society? □

Incertitude

The title of an article in *The New Republic* asks (dramatically or sheepishly?):

Is Keynes Dead?

We're glad we can solve *New Republic's* quandary—yes, he is. Since 1946. However, we suspect that what *TNR's* bookish editors had in mind when naming the article was: "Are Keynesian Economic Theories and Policies Dead?" As to that, we do not know, but it seems to us that they are certainly ailing. □

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Time's Hypocrisy: The Continuing Saga

The cover story is about aching backs. On the cover we can see half of an aching back (cut vertically), and, naturally, one neatly exhibited, beautifully curved left buttock of a youthful model, as well as a lovely contour of her left breast. We know several grandmas with excruciating back aches; for some reason, they were not asked to model for an illustration of what *Time* calls "the oldest agony." We wonder why?

Inside such an eloquently coy cover, we find, among other things, an essay entitled "The Bull Market in Personal Secrets." Its author complains bitterly about the recent flood of salacious memoirs of movie stars and other celebrities. We read there:

> The public traffic in what used to be respected as intimate lore is conspicuous and feverish enough to have provoked some thought about the implications of the trend. Something more than a mere departure from decorum must be involved when a society begins to live habitually in a blizzard of under-the-rug sweepings.

We may be able to help the editors of *Time* in their newest agony. That "something more" they are fretting about can be found in what they propound as movie and book reviews, what they support in their "Behavior" section, and, above all, what they relish in their "People" department. A hard look at the last 15 years of their own journal would make them marvel at their contribution to the nausea in our popular culture. But would they admit it? Ever? □

Correct

In a recent issue of *The New Republic,* we found an elucidating, impressive and, to our mind, valuable essay entitled: "War Against the West," by Mr. J. B. Kelly. We can read there:

> . . . the West, which is equated in the Arab mind with Christendom, has remained a familiar and tangible enemy, one which has never ceased, at least in popular mythology, to oppress and exploit the Arab peoples.
>
> Racked thus by powerful sentiments of grievance and resentment against the West, the Arabs see the oil weapon as a gift sent by God to redress the balance between Christendom and Islam. It enables them to act as though the might and grandeur of the Umayyad and Abbasid caliphates has been restored, to lay the Christian West under tribute to the Moslem East, and to fulfill the destiny which God in His infinite wisdom has ordained for those to whom He has chosen to reveal the one true faith. Extravagant though these fancies may appear to Western eyes, they are very real to those who entertain them, and infinitely more appealing than the calmer dictates of reason . . . .
>
> The conduct of the Arab oil-producing states over the past decade has demonstrated beyond the slightest doubt that their actions are motivated far more by rapacity and by rancor toward the West than they are by fear of the Soviet Union . . . .
>
> That upsurge and its aftermath also exposed the irrelevance of the belief in the incompatibility of Islam and Marxism with which the West has been wont to comfort itself.

In *The Rockford Papers* of September 1979, Leopold Tyrmand wrote:

> In the Middle East, Israel is only a part of a much larger problem. We live in a time when the Moslem and Arab world is materializing its centuries-old dream. Christianity defeated Islam in the historic struggle for the Eastern hemisphere; this was completed in the 19th century by the colonial empires of England and France. However, both Islam and the Arabs . . . have never relinquished the idea of revenge. Oil as a weapon has made vengeance feasible . . . . the Mohammedan universe, under Arab stewardship, is to embark on the crusade for its long-awaited preponderance on the world scene . . . . The Arabs cannot deploy their oil strategy against the West so long as Israel exists. Oil must first serve to force the West to annihilate Israel . . . . The West cannot lose sight of the arch-totalitarian vectors of Moslem and Arab history, their traditions of political despotism and oppression, their receptiveness to tyrannical concepts of government, their cruelty in dealing with political adversaries, their idolatry of [military] conquests, finally —their easy compliance with fascism [and] Nazism . . . as the outgrowth of Western sociopolitical modes . . . . However, what's most disturbing is the smooth partnership between most Arab states and the Soviet Union, the total dependence of the PLO upon Moscow, the KGB and Soviet armament, and, last but not least, the enigmatic fact of the loyalty of Moslems to the Soviet state. The communists in Russia wage a ferocious warfare against any Christian denomination; the large Islamic population in Soviet central Asia seems to collaborate readily with the Politbureau and pledge the Soviet state an allegiance.*

Better late than never—we are truly delighted that *The New Republic,* an unflinching supporter of Israel, finally has reached a conclusion and indulged in an interpretation which we emphasized over a year ago. □

*The text from which this quote is taken is available from The Rockford Institute for $1.00.

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